

SILKEN THOMAS

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Duquesne University:



Gift of

William H. Lacey



Silken Thomas

Copyright, 1918, By
Samuel Byrne.

To William H. Lacey, Esq.

With the author's compliments and regards.

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Pittsburg, Pa.

SILKEN THOMAS

An Irish Historical Drama.

Period: 1535-37

By SAMUEL BYRNE.

Ye Geraldines! Ye Geraldines!
When Silken Thomas flung
King Henry's sword on council board
The English Thanes among;
You never ceased to battle brave
Against the English sway
Till axe and brand and treachery
Your proudest cut away.

THOMAS DAVIS.

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SILKEN THOMAS, who at the age of twenty-one was appointed by his father, the Earl of Kildare, and Lord Deputy of Ireland, to fill the latter office during the Earl's absence in England, whither he has been summoned by King Henry VIII to answer political charges which had been made against him by his enemies in Dublin.

MONSIGNOR MACHUGH, an Irish prelate, who has returned from Spain.

THE O'BYRNE, an Irish Chieftain in Wicklow.

O'DONNELL, an Irish Chieftain in Tyrconnell.

SIR JAMES DE LA HIDE, member of the Council of State in Dublin; a friend of Lord Kildare.

LORD RADLEY, aged about fifty, a titled Englishman, charged with a secret mission.

ALLEN, Secretary to the Council of State, Dublin, and nephew to Archbishop Allen, who was formerly Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

TAUNTON, Governor of Newgate Jail, Dublin.


GERARD, a jailor in the secret pay of Radley.

TWO ENGLISH WORKMEN. English Soldiers who escort SILKEN THOMAS to the gallows.

MOIRA, bride of The O'Byrne, and sister of O'Donnell.

COUNCILLORS OF STATE, courtiers, soldiers, O'Donnell's Clansmen, armed with muskets, swords and pikes.

JERRY, BARNEY, AND MIKE, Strolling Minstrels.



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ACT I.

SCENE I.—Rural landscape, the grounds adjoining the Castle of The O'Byrne in Imail, in the County of Wicklow.

[*Enter two of O'DONNELL'S SOLDIERS.*]

FIRST SOLDIER (looking around him): I felt sure it was Larry O'Donovan who was coming this way. It looked very like him, anyhow.

SECOND SOLDIER: It ~~was~~ Larry, allright. I could tell him from his walk if he was half a mile away. He must have turned into that wood over there.

FIRST SOLDIER: I am anxious to see him because I have a pleasant surprise for him. This morning I met a cousin of his who has been living here for years, and who would like to hear some news about his kinsmen up in Tyrconnell.

SECOND SOLDIER: He'll certainly be glad to see that cousin; for he was talking to me about him not long ago, and he said he had not heard from him for years. Isn't this Imail a fine country?

FIRST SOLDIER: Indeed, it is a fine country, as you say, this Imail.

SECOND SOLDIER: We haven't any scenery like it up in our Northern land of Tyrconnell, but ours is fine, too. It's of a different style. Sure, we have all sorts of scenery in Ireland—a variety that doesn't exist in any other clime. And I'm not saying that because you and I are natives. I've heard members of our clan who traveled all over Europe say so. Just think of all the different kinds we've passed through in our long but leisurely and very pleasant march to this place, escorting our beloved chieftain,

The O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, and his beautiful and only sister, the Princess Moira, who this morning was wedded to The O'Byrne, the Prince of Imail.

FIRST SOLDIER: And the historic spots that we've seen—especially the battlefields. I can't recall half that the Shannakee told us. We saw the ruins of the Sassenah castle at Clones that was destroyed by the victorious soldiers of The O'Neill in 1212; Drumliff, where Godfrey O'Donnell conquered the allied armies of the Viceroy and Fitzgerald; Kilmainham and Killechin; Knockvoe, where the Sassenah's superior numbers defeated our dauntless native forces; and Monabraheer, where the defeat of Knockvoe was grandly avenged.

SECOND SOLDIER: Ay; grandly avenged, as you rightly say. Your mentioning of those battles makes me long to be engaged in one.

FIRST SOLDIER: And I too. When they called us the "Fighting Race" they made no mistake. We're born soldiers, every one of us; and when we haven't an opportunity of fighting the common enemy we fight a little amongst ourselves, just to keep in practice.

SECOND SOLDIER: I hope we'll soon get a chance to have a whack at the Sassenah.

FIRST SOLDIER: So do I, with all my heart.

[EXEUNT]

[Enter Jerry, a bagpiper. He looks around as if seeking somebody.]

BAGPIPER: What's keeping my two fellow-artists? I

thought I was a little late, but I find I am the first at the rendyvoo.

[Looking to the right.]

A fine castle he has indeed, The O'Byrne, the young chief who got married this morning. I wish them joy all their lives, which I hope will be long ones. I'll play a tune to pass away the time till my colleagues come.

[Sits down on rustic seat and plays a jig.

If the audience applauds at the end, he says]:

Oh! wait till by-and-bye, when we all play together. Ah, here's one of them.

[Enter, MIKE, a Harpist.]

HARPIST: So you're here already, Jerry?

JERRY: What's the use of asking me such a question as that? Don't you see I'm here?

HARPIST: You're always ready with an answer, Jerry.

JERRY: What did the Lord give me a tongue for?

HARPIST: Did yeh hear the latest news?

JERRY: About what, Mike?

HARPIST: I'm told that all the clans are going to be united at last.

JERRY: That's good news, if it's true. Is there any special reason?

MIKE: Special reason! Why, there's every reason why they should be united. How can we ever beat the Sassenah if we're quarrelling among ourselves all the time?

JERRY: True for yeh, Mike. It's time they were driven out of the country. Talking about the Sassenah, did yeh hear what happened to Patcy Brogan's Sassenah landlord in the County Dublin?

MIKE: I didn't.

JERRY: The very day he evicted Patcy and his family and took possession of his farm, he fell sick, and I hear he's getting worse all the time.

MIKE: The devil's skewer to him! Here's Barney Donovan with his fiddle.

[*Enter BARNEY, a Fiddler.*]

JERRY: Late as usual, Barney, for our rehearsal. It'll soon be time to go into the castle.

BARNEY: It wasn't my fault, I tell you. I met Tim Hoolahin and his colleen; and he begged of me, like a cripple at a cross-roads, to play them a dancing-tune. And she said to me: "Ah! Barney, do." And how could I refuse her, with that sweet voice and coaxing look of hers that would soften the heart of an anchorite?

JERRY: Did anybody tell yeh how Tim's grandmother won a gold coin by her ready wit the other day?

MIKE: No.

BARNEY: I didn't hear of it.

JERRY: They're so poor, yeh know, after so much sickness in the family and a bad crop, that she sits in a chair in the road on fine days, and offers to pray that the good wishes of people passing by may be granted, if they give her a little alms. That close-fisted Jim McMullen and his wife were passing. They got married a few weeks ago, you know. The woman beckoned to them, and they went over to her and asked her what she wanted. She told them. Miserly Jim, who's as crooked as a dog's hind leg, bad cess to him! tried to avoid giving her a little money, although his wife urged him. He's a bit clever, you know; and so he says: "How could I

have a wish to make? Am'n't I married to Kathleen, and so am the happiest man in the world?" She was more than his match. She answered him right away: "But could yeh not wish to be always as happy as y'are now?" That fixed him. He opened his purse, and as there happened to be nothing there but gold coins, that he had just taken out of the bank, he gave her one of them.

BARNEY: Did you ever hear how the Irish jig was originated, and where?

THE OTHERS: No.

BARNEY: In the Garden of Eden.

JERRY: Whisht, you omadhawn; how could the Irish jig have been invented in Paradise?

BARNEY: I'll tell yeh. As soon as Adam saw Eve he felt interested in her, and no wonder; for she was a pretty colleen, by all accounts. He smiled at her, and she smiled back at him. Then they stepped away from each other a little, to have a good look at each other. They fell in love with each other right away. Then they kissed each other. No; I'm wrong: He kissed her and she returned the compliment; and to show how happy they were they danced fornist each other, in jig style. And that's when and where the Irish jig began.

MIKE: That beats all.

JERRY: Now that we're all here, let's proceed with our practice.

[*They play several tunes.*]

JERRY: They may be ready for us now. Let us not wait to be called. Come on.

[*As they are going off PHELM, one of The O'Byrne's soldiers, enters.*]

PHELIM: What a beautiful day it is for a wedding! One would think that nature had purposely put on her festival attire for the occasion. And the lovely Princess Moira deserves all the honors that can be bestowed upon her on this joyful day, when she joins her sweet young life to that of our noble Chief. (*Looking upward*) Her eyes are more prettily blue than that sky above; and the love-light that gleams and glitters in them to-day makes the sun look like the moon in comparison with it.

[EXIT]

[Enter MOIRA. *The sounds of the minstrels' music come from the castle. She listens to them with a smile; and then sings the following song*]:

My heart with joy is overflowing,
And all around is bright and gay;
Love's perfumes rare
Suffuse the air;
For, Oh, this is my wedding day!
My wedding day!
My wedding day!
No sweeter words a maid can say.

The leaves in brightest emerald glisten;
The flow'rs their daintiest tints display;
Each passing breeze
Laughs through the trees;
For Oh, this is my wedding day!
My wedding day!
My wedding day!
No sweeter words a maid can say.

The lark his merriest notes is warbling;
The throstle chants his softest lay;
Love's light outgleams
The sun's best beams;

For Oh, this is my wedding day!

My wedding day!

My wedding day!

No sweeter words a maid can say.

[*Exit into the castle. PHELMIM re-enters. Suddenly looking to the right*]:

What's that? It looks like the body-guard of a Prince. Who is he, I wonder? And they are coming in this direction. I must tell The O'Byrne about it.

[EXIT]

[*Re-enter Minstrels*]

JERRY: What's that? Oh, bedad! here's the young Lord Deputy, SILKEN THOMAS, the noble son of the great Earl of Kildare. I know him by his rich costume, his youthfulness, and his guards. He's a fine fellow, I'm told—puts on no airs because of his position or his aristocratic family, but makes free with all alike.

MIKE: I'm glad to hear that. I don't like those members of high families who act as though they belonged to a superior order of beings altogether.

[*They play*]

[*Enter SILKEN THOMAS in a resplendent white costume, a white silken fringe on his helmet and the same on the helmets of the soldiers who follow him, preceded by pages.*]

SILKEN THOMAS: Good morrow, boys; I hope you are well. You look as if you were.

JERRY: Good morrow and joy! my lord. We are all well, God be praised!

SILKEN THOMAS: I am glad to hear it. You have come, I suppose, to furnish music at the wedding feast which, I understand, is going on in The O'Byrne's Castle?

BARNEY: Yes, my lord.

JERRY: We've just had a little rehearsal; and we're all in good fettle, as you will soon find out. They tell me, my lord, that you like to sing a song yourself once in a while.

SILKEN THOMAS: Yes; I try to sing sometimes.

MIKE: I hope you'll kindly favor us with one at the wedding feast. I've never heard a lord sing, and, Faith! I'd like to hear one. It must be fine.

MIKE: Ay, indeed; it must be great.

SILKEN THOMAS: Not at all. It is nothing of the kind. Music and song—all the arts, in fact—place all of us upon the same level; and as to proficiency in any of them, the peasant oftentimes surpasses the prince. In bestowing gifts like these Nature makes no discrimination, or, if she does, she invariably favors the humble and lowly. I would wager that each of you is a better singer than I.

MUSICIANS: No, no.

SILKEN THOMAS: Now, don't be too sure. You may be disappointed.

[*Exit SILKEN THOMAS and his escort (to left) followed, after a pause, by the Musicians.*]

[*Enter O'BYRNE and O'DONNELL from right, conversing.*]

O'BYRNE: I am glad that you are fond of hunting and fishing, for we can provide you with lots of both in this district during your stay, which I hope will not be short.

[*Enter PHELM*]

PHELM (*to O'Byrne*): A distinguished visitor has arrived at the castle—the young Lord Deputy, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, the son of the Earl of Kildare.

O'BYRNE: What can be the purpose of this unexpected visit of SILKEN THOMAS?

O'DONNELL: SILKEN THOMAS! Is that what you call him here?

O'BYRNE: That is the name they give him in Kildare and Dublin.

O'DONNELL: Why?

O'BYRNE: His mother, who has been dead for some years, was so fond of him that she always insisted upon his wearing rich silken garments; and now that she is no more he continues to do so out of respect for her memory. His personal guards, too, wear a white silken fringe in their caps. As you know, his father, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, the personal representative of the English King in this country, appointed him in his own place, notwithstanding his youth—he is only 21 years of age—during his absence in London, where he has been suddenly summoned by King Henry to answer serious charges that have been made against him by the Sassenah members of his Council of State.

O'DONNELL: I did not know he was so young. Such a lofty and responsible position requires not only some statemanship, but also some knowledge of men and of political affairs.

O'BYRNE: You may depend upon it—his father knew what he was doing when he appointed him. He has trained the youth well. A fault of SILKEN THOMAS is that he is impulsive and is inclined to be rash.

That disposition he inherits from his father. But, apart from that, he is, they tell me, clever and wise beyond his years. He is a scholar, a patriot, and a good swordsman.

O'DONNELL: I shall be glad to make the acquaintance of so picturesque a personality.

O'BYRNE: Come on, then; and I shall introduce you to him. But here he comes in search of me.

[*Enter SILKEN THOMAS, MOIRA and MONSIGNOR MACHUGH.*]

O'BYRNE: (*Shaking SILKEN THOMAS' hand*). I am delighted to see you, Lord Thomas. To what circumstance do we owe the honor and pleasure of your presence?

SILKEN THOMAS: I was travelling in this vicinity, and I heard that this was your wedding-day; so I have come to offer you and your bride my felicitations and best wishes. For I remember having seen you in my father's house, Earl's Court, near Dublin, and I have heard him mention your name several times.

O'BYRNE: I am grateful for your kind thoughtfulness. This is the bride (*presents MOIRA to him*). This is her brother, The O'Donnell, the Chief of Tyrconnell (*presents O'DONNELL to him*). And this is Monsignor MacHugh, lately returned from Spain, who married us this morning, and whose parents were friends of mine (*presents the MONSIGNOR to him*).

[*Enter Peasant, running.*]

PEASANT: I beg a thousand pardons, gentlemen. I've been told there's a priest here. (O'BYRNE *points to* MONSIGNOR MACHUGH) Father, an uncle of mine who has been sick for some time has taken a turn

for the worse. Our own Soggartli Aroon has just gone on a sick call that came from the other end of the parish; and as I heard there was a priest staying at the Castle I hurried here.

MONSIGNOR: I must leave you for a while, my friends.

[*Exeunt MONSIGNOR AND PEASANT.*]

MOIRA: I hope you will not be detained long. (*Looking to left*) Somebody is calling me.

[*Exit*]

O'BYRNE: (*To SILKEN THOMAS*) Your kindly visit is a new departure. Hitherto the authorities in Dublin have shown scant courtesy to us native Chiefs.

SILKEN THOMAS: That is true; and I am very sorry to say so. But my father has resolved to put an end to the wrongful system under which the official recognition and honor that are due to the princely heads of our native clans have been withheld from them. And why should he not do so? Are we not all peers in rank and lineage—brother-patriots? The foes of Ireland are our common foes, and the welfare of Ireland is our common aim.

O'DONNELL: I am very agreeably surprised to hear you speak like that.

O'BYRNE: (*To O'DONNELL*). Then you have not yet heard about his father's grand project—the establishment of a National League of Patriots, whose one aim will be to make our country prosperous and happy?

O'DONNELL: Oh, that was what my uncle was going to tell me about before I started from home. He had been visiting Dublin; and while there had called

to see the Earl of Kildare. As I was in a hurry to begin my long journey here, he told me that it would be time enough to speak to me about it when I came back, especially as it was a matter that required careful consideration. And he added that perhaps you would discuss it with me.

O'BYRNE: It was certainly my intention to do so, although it is a little premature to talk about it yet.

SILKEN THOMAS: Before my father set sail for London, he spoke to me enthusiastically about it. (*To O'BYRNE*) I know that he has been consulting you and other Chieftains about it, and has also mentioned it to friends and relatives of those whom he has not yet seen personally.

O'BYRNE: And what, may I ask, do you think of his great design, Lord Thomas?

SILKEN THOMAS: My father's views, purposes, and hopes are also mine.

O'BYRNE: Those manly, patriotic words do honor alike to your head and your heart.

O'DONNELL: Your father can count with the utmost confidence upon the hearty and active support of my clan; and I know that he may also rely upon that of the Clan O'Neill.

O'BYRNE: Tyrconnell and Tyrowen have always been staunch and true.

O'DONNELL: And always will be.

SILKEN THOMAS: The gallant and ever faithful North!

O'DONNELL: (*aside*) Who would have suspected such warm patriotism in these Geraldines?

O'BYRNE: Your father's predecessors held very different opinions from his in connection with the govern-

ment of Ireland. They did their best, in fact, to crush the patriotic spirit in our breasts.

SILKEN THOMAS: Alas, that is true. They were mistaken and misguided. Otherwise they would never have undertaken so futile, nay, so hopeless as well as so unpatriotic a task.

O'BYRNE: Hopeless and unpatriotic—yes. In vain they and the heads of other houses have waged war upon our devoted clans, and have expended much money in efforts to corrupt our followers. But the dauntless spirit of our nationality has never drooped and never shall droop; for it is incorporated with our blood, glowing with an unquenchable flame in our hearts and souls, the very core and fibre of our being, like our old Faith.

SILKEN THOMAS: Let us forget those evil deeds and the evil days when they were done.

O'DONNELL: Ay, let us forget them, and forgive them too, in view of the era of peace, liberty and prosperity that will soon begin.

O'BYRNE: To hasten on the dawn of that bright day a great, popular and trusted leader is required—a patriot, a warrior, and a statesman, all in one. Such a man is your noble father. But the question is: Will the King permit him to come back? His majesty is known to be fickle; and I have heard that he is jealous of your father's growing popularity and influence with our people.

SILKEN THOMAS: Oh, there need be no doubt whatever as to his early return. Whatever charges have been made against him cannot be serious. Whether they are, or are not, however, I feel certain that he will clear himself.

O'BYRNE: I hope so. But pardon me if I say that I have my doubts as to his getting a fair hearing with the King and his Councillors.

SILKEN THOMAS: (*with energy, and placing his hand on the hilt of his sword*) If my father is treated with unfairness, injustice, or indignity by the Royal Council—yea, or by the King himself.—(*He smiles*). But there is no ground for alarm. My father's life has always been dominated by a passionate devotion to his King and his country.

O'DONNELL: (*aside*) How can he really love his native land if he is loyal to its usurping King? (*Aloud*) His King and his country! Does not the English King account it treason for us to love our native land?

SILKEN THOMAS: Surely not. If that were so my father and I would be regarded by him as a pair of traitors.

O'DONNELL: Some of his representatives do certainly look upon us native chiefs as traitors—or, at least, as rebels.

SILKEN THOMAS: Yes, I know that. But the King is not to blame for that. His majesty desires that we should all be peaceable, prosperous and contented.

O'DONNELL: (*aside*) Moryah!

[O'BYRNE *smiles*.]

O'BYRNE: But come, Lord Thomas, and be our honored guest at the wedding feast.

O'DONNELL: (*looking to the right*) A battalion of my clansmen is approaching.

[EXEUNT]

(Music is heard in the distance, growing louder as it comes nearer—the March, "O'Donnell Aboo!") Enter Soldiers, some armed with swords, some with pikes, and some with muskets. They continue marching for a minute or two, entering the stage at one side and leaving it by another, and returning on the other side, thus conveying the idea that they are much more numerous than they are.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—The same at night. Moonlight.

[Enter MOIRA, bride of O'BYRNE, looking around her as if expecting to see somebody.]

MOIRA: What can my brother mean by sending me a message by one of his men asking me to see him here alone about something very important? Surely he has not had a quarrel with my husband? Heaven forbid! Men of our impulsive race are swift to get angry, even over a fancied slight or insult, just as they are swift to forgive and forget.

[Enter LORD RADLEY, his sword in his belt.]

What! You dare to come here again, after the impudent remark you made to me yesterday! I should have told my brother about it, or my husband; but I forgot all about it today.

RADLEY: Your husband? Oh, yes; you were married today. What a winsome bride you are! That word, "husband," coming from your lips, makes me jealous.

MOIRA: Begone, insulting stranger! (*looking anxiously to the right and then to the left*). But my brother will soon be here; and when I tell him that you, a Sassenah, have been trying to force your unwelcome acquaintance upon me; that you have been rude to me—nay, insulting to me—he will give you the thrashing that you deserve.

RADLEY: Rude to you! Insulting to you! I am incapable of being either to any lady, and least of all to you, for whom, although this is only the second time that I have seen you, I have great respect, deep regard, sincere admiration, and—do not chide me for its hasty growth—genuine affection. When I saw you walking alone here yesterday I said to myself: “There is the prettiest and most charming woman I have ever seen.” I at once made inquiries about you, and got all the information I desired. I have a proposal to make to you——

MOIRA: How dare you talk like that to me?

RADLEY: Wait a moment, LADY MOIRA—you see, I know your name; and a sweet one it is (*Aside*:) I shall first try to touch her imagination with a few poetical phrases that I memorized this morning when I devised this scheme for having a private interview with her. (*Aloud*:) If you grant my request you will find my castle across the sea to be a veritable palace-bower of love, where gorgeous garments, costliest jewels, and gold in profusion shall be yours; with vassals to do your bidding, accomplished musicians to fill the air with rapturous melodies and choicest flowers to suffuse it with dreamy perfumes; where yours shall be halcyon days and ambrosial nights.

MOIRA: (*Aside*) Is he a lunatic? or is he sane and serious? (*Aloud*;) If you are in your right senses——

RADLEY: I am, I assure you. Why do you ask me such a question?

MOIRA: Then I say that you know little about the daughters of Erin if you think that the poorest, the lowliest, of them could be thus lured from the path of virtue. Love may tempt them. Gold can not.

[*Enter O'BYRNE unobserved.*]

O'BYRNE: That sounds like MOIRA's voice. (*Sees MOIRA and RADLEY.*) What! Can I believe my eyes? MOIRA, my bride of this morning, talking here in the dark to a strange man! What does it mean? I'll try to be patient.

RADLEY: Nicely spoken, fair champion of your countrywomen. But you forget that women are the same all the world over. Sex and passion have no nationality. I am a noble——

MOIRA: Noble!—in an ironical sense. That princely word has no application to men like you.

RADLEY: (*Irritably*) Don't interrupt me, please. I am a member of the nobility——

MOIRA: Nobility can never be allied with dishonor.

RADLEY: I am prominently connected with King Henry's court, and have been charged with a special mission in this country at present. The important work which I was specially sent here to do is finished; and I shall soon set sail for home. If you are wise you will avail yourself of the magnificent opportunity that I offer you; you will come with me——

MOIRA: (*Looking to the right and left*) What keeps my brother? Oh, that he or my husband were here!

RADLEY: Your brother is not coming. It was I who arranged this romantic rendez-vous by having a note sent to you purporting to come from him.

MOIRA: Dishonorable trickster! Scoundrel! Reprobate! Nobody with a spark of manliness left in him would stoop to so mean, cowardly and despicable a subterfuge as this.

O'BYRNE: (*Aside*) Good! God bless you, MOIRA! (*Draws his sword.*)

RADLEY: It was a lover's stratagem. All things, they say, are fair in love and war. Now, listen to me, and be sensible. What prospects have you here? A rebel's wife; a rebel's home—what a precarious life and lot! I can send your husband to a dungeon or to the headsman's block whenever it pleases me to do so. So you see, your destiny and his are both in my keeping. Yield to my desire, then— with feigned reluctance, if you will—but——

MOIRA: Our destinies are in the hands of God. Begone, you loathsome Sassenah!

RADLEY: You spurn and defy me, eh? Then I shall change my methods. I have given you a chance to yield with grace and dignity. Now, goaded by your insolence, I shall use force. Come; I'll stand no further trifling. My carriage is waiting for us close by. (*Advances to MOIRA*) You shall be mine! (*Puts his arm around her*) You are mine!

[MOIRA Screams.]

O'BYRNE: Stand aside, MOIRA acushla, lest by accident my sword should touch you. (*To RADLEY.*) Villain! You shall expiate this outrage with your life.

RADLEY: (*defending himself with his sword.*) What! Listening all the time! Foolhardy lout! You are courting death, and you shall win it.

[*They Fight.*]

RADLEY: (*Warding off O'BYRNE's attacks with difficulty and retreating step by step*)—This rascal fights like a fiend. I did not bargain—Ho, men! draw near! Haste! Haste!

(O'BYRNE by a skillful turn of his sword wrenches RADLEY's from his hand. RADLEY quickly jumps back; four soldiers in red coats rush on the scene with drawn swords and attack O'BYRNE).

O'BYRNE: (*Fighting them furiously*) Come on! Come on! a dozen of you Sassenah—ay, a hundred!

MOIRA: (*Clasping her hands in distress*). Help him, O Heaven! in this unequal struggle.

RADLEY: (*Examining his clothes and feeling his body*). No blood! No wounds! I could have sworn I felt his blade prod me somewhere. How lucky it was that I had my men near! (*To his men*) Disarm him. Do not kill him. His time has yet to come.

[O'BYRNE IS OVERPOWERED.]

Good! Now hold him fast and take him to the carriage. I'll take his bride along. (*Puts his arm around MOIRA again.*)

MOIRA: (*Looking to the right.*) Thank God! My brother, accompanied by some of his men, is coming.

RADLEY: (*Looking in the same direction*)—Quick, quick! A lot of rebels are approaching.

(MOIRA escapes from his grasp and runs to the left.) Curses on them! She has escaped from me. But I shall catch her soon.

O'BYRNE: You old profligate! If you ever hurt a hair of her head I'll run my sword through your evil heart.

[EXEUNT]

(Enter O'DONNELL with several of his followers.)

O'DONNELL: *(to MOIRA.)* I heard angry voices and the clash of swords in this direction; and hastened hither. What was the fight about and who took part in it? And what brings you here, MOIRA dear?

MOIRA: *(Excitedly)*—A middle-aged man who claims that he belongs to the English nobility was in this neighborhood yesterday, and had the impudence to try to get into a conversation with me. I repulsed his rudeness and walked on. A little while ago he lured me here by sending me a message supposed to have come from you, asking me to meet you here in reference to an important subject. Foolishly unsuspecting, I came. He had arranged to abduct me. A carriage and several armed men were waiting close by, concealed in the darkness. O'BYRNE happened to be near when he seized me. They fought; but his men rushed to his assistance, overpowered O'BYRNE, and took him to the carriage. He had begun to drag me along when I fortunately tore myself from his grasp; and then, thank Heaven! I saw you coming. But you must hurry and catch up to them.

O'DONNELL: My dear sister, when you received that strange message you ought to have doubted its authenticity. But there is no time to talk about it now. I'll take half a dozen of my horsemen and start immediately in pursuit of those Sassenah ruf-

fians; and it will go hard with me if I don't soon overtake them.

[END OF FIRST ACT.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Rural landscape, the grounds adjoining Maynooth Castle, the ancestral home of the Earls of Kildare.

[*Enter* MONSIGNOR MACHUGH.]

MONSIGNOR: (*Looking around him, smiling*) How I do love this dear old land of mine! Nowhere else is the sky so tenderly blue or the grass so refreshingly green, or the flowers so varied and beautiful. Land of pure and lovely womanhood and of brave and virtuous manhood! I esteem myself highly privileged to be numbered amongst your sons. There is hardly a mountain of yours that has not its mystery, a valley that has not its legend, a castle or a cabin that has not its romance. Prosperity and happiness should always be your portion.

[*He advances a few steps.*]

[*Enter* SILKEN THOMAS, attended by pages. On seeing MONSIGNOR he pauses and listens unobserved by him.]

Oh, what pure joy it is to be alone
With Nature in her kindest mood, as now
She is, suffused with summer's noon-day warmth,
And canopied in fleckless blue, uplifting
The heart that is responsive to the spell
Of Beauty, Poesy, and Music, as
The mystic glamor of a starry night,
By Cynthia's subtile radiance solemnized,
Fills with a sad-sweet ecstasy the mind
Whose brighter gleams have passed through Passion's prism.

(He pauses, and looks towards the castle.)

There stands Maynooth, the castle of Kildare,
Whose noble son with honor fills his post,
Till to his native country he returns.
I come to sue for justice.

SILKEN THOMAS (*Aside*):

Justice thou

Shalt have, and generosity as well.

MONSIGNOR (*gazing upward*):

In casual currents of our highest thoughts
We sometimes catch a momentary glimpse
Of the Almighty's plans; and our rapt minds
Rise from our bodies and, in awe sublime,
Sense dimly some of Life's great mysteries.

[He pauses and reflects]

SILKEN THOMAS (*Aside*):

I shall be glad to make a bosom friend
Of this philosopher. And willingly
I shall comply with his request at once.

MONSIGNOR:

O holy, changeless and undying Church!
Whose only aim is man's true welfare here
And everlasting bliss beyond the tomb!
Benignant mother, whose most gladsome task
Is timely rescue of the outcast souls
That, shipwrecked, famished, aimless, hopeless, roam
The bleakest shores of life's uncharted seas.
Heaven speed the destined day when all mankind
With grace-illumined vision shall behold
The light divine that marks thy mystic way
Athwart the ages!—that same sacred light
Of which wise Socrates, that pagan saint,

While vaguely yearning for the coming Faith,
 Once saw a far-off foregleam. Had he lived
 Till Christ, the Keystone of the Arch of Time,
 Humanity's Expectance and Desire,
 Arrived on earth, as had been prophesied,
 How joyed he would have been! But I must go
 To see Lord Thomas.

SILKEN THOMAS (*stepping forward*):

He is here.

(MONSIGNOR *starts*)

Surprised

At this, my sudden apparition?

Well,

Anon I shall explain it.

(*Holds out his hand to MONSIGNOR*)

Welcome here!

MONSIGNOR:

This condescension, this politeness, fill
 My heart with gratitude, Lord Deputy.

SILKEN THOMAS:

No condescension this. As man to man,
 Or, if thou wilt, as friend to friend, I greet thee.

MONSIGNOR:

Friendship! Ennobling, Heaven-born sentiment!
 Surpassing woman's tenderest, truest love,
 And more enduring! May it not be said
 That friendship is the better part of love?

SILKEN THOMAS:

It may, I think, with truth. But let's postpone
 This philosophic conversation till
 A more appropriate time encourages
 Us to pursue it farther. I assure
 Thee that, thine obvious scholarship aside,
 The sacred office that thy garb proclaims
 Commands my deep respect.

MONSIGNOR:

Thou hast the mien
Of one who recently hath felt the pang
That smites the fresh and glowing heart of Youth
When from his dreamy height he must descend
To Manhood's prosy plain, mayhap to dwell
With minds o'er which bright Fancy never flung
Her opalescent glamor—souls whose thoughts
Ascend no higher than their sordid selves,
Whose aims and aspirations are confined
Within the stinted scope of their dull view.
To have much wealth, to have much pleasure—these
Their life-ambitions are. With that base kind
'Twill chill thine ardent nature to consort.

SILKEN THOMAS:

But I meet nobler minds—just now thine own,
That with the gems of highest knowledge gleams.
(*Smiling.*) I overheard thee but a moment since
Robing in simple but becoming words
Some rare and holy thoughts.

MONSIGNOR:

Amongst our chiefs,
And their devoted clansmen, there are men
Who with the virtues that exalt a race,
And nurture heroes, richly are endowed.
Our Irish peasants are a race apart:
The fervor of their Faith e'er keeps them true,
Through all her trials, to their motherland;
Their Keltic ardor makes their Faith sublime—
Untitled nobles in their humble lives,
And saints uncanonized when they are dead.

SILKEN THOMAS:

That generous eulogy they well deserve.

MONSIGNOR :

My lord, to crave a favor at thy hands
I have come hither.

SILKEN THOMAS :

What is thy request?

[Enter RADLEY, unobserved; he hides behind a
tree and listens.]

MONSIGNOR :

A royal courtier, from across the sea,
Made an audacious effort to abduct
The bride of The O'BYRNE, the gallant chief
Of Wicklow, on their very wedding day.

SILKEN THOMAS :

O'BYRNE's fair bride! Why, I called there myself
To wish them joy that day.

MONSIGNOR :

I saw you there.

SILKEN THOMAS :

A very pleasant time we had. I am
Amazed to hear that such a happy day
Was closed with such a grievous incident.

MONSIGNOR :

He trapped her by a letter falsely signed
As written by her brother, who had come
Down from the trusty North. The Wicklow chief
Arrived in time to baffle his design.
They fought; and The O'BYRNE disarmed the
wretch,
But soon was overpowered by his men,
Bound, and forthwith to Dublin carried off.
In Newgate Jail he is imprisoned now.

SILKEN THOMAS (*Angrily*) :

And has it come to this: That in our land

No longer Innocence and Virtue may
In the broad light of day go forth without
Incurring risk of insult at the hands
Of titled ruffians?

MONSIGNOR :

Outrages like this
Should not occur in our old motherland,
That has for many centuries enjoyed
A high repute in Christendom—a nation
Meant by the Almighty to be pure and free,
Contented, prosperous, and progressive; where
Justice and wisdom should harmoniously
Blend in enlightened statesmanship; and where
Both peasant and patrician equal rights
Should have before the law, just as they have
In Holy Church's eyes.

SILKEN THOMAS :

And such a country
Ours soon will be, if God will only spare
My father to achieve the purposes
He has so close at heart—unless, alas!
Another period of destructive strife
And widespread, cruel suffering remains
In store for her. There is a prophecy
Of which I heard some time ago, which said
That after being for an age the home
Of ripest scholarship and brilliant minds,
She would pass through an era of distress
And fearful persecution.—

MONSIGNOR :

I recall

That prophecy. It is by Malachy,
The Irish saint who, for all future time,

Foretold, in mottoes brief yet clear, the fate
And personality of every Pope.
It was recorded by a brother-saint
Who knelt beside him when he passed away.
These are his words—I well remember them:
“This prophecy, upon his dying bed,
He made with tearful eyes; and I have writ
His words exactly as he uttered them:
‘Island of Saints and Teachers in the past,
Island of Martyrs in the time to come
For several hundred bitter years; and then
Island of missionaries who shall spread
The Faith through mighty nations yet unknown;
Peace, unity, contentment thine at last.’”

SILKEN THOMAS:

Let us devoutly hope those years of woe
That he predicts have now all run their course.

MONSIGNOR:

God grant thy hope! And now the favor I
Have come to ask of thee today.

SILKEN THOMAS:

A strict

Investigation shall at once be made
Into this villainous outrage. Rest assured
Tomorrow The O'BYRNE shall be released.

MONSIGNOR:

Say not: “Tomorrow.” That day ne'er shall come.
In yonder fuller, endless life today
Shall be tomorrow for eternity,
And yesterday shall ever be today.

SILKEN THOMAS:

At once, then, I shall send a messenger
To Taunton, Governor of Newgate Jail.

The Wicklow Chief his freedom shall regain
Before the setting of another sun.

[ENTER PAGE]

My Lord, an officer with urgent mien
Awaits thee at the Castle.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Who is he?

PAGE:

FERRUS O'DONNELL.

MONSIGNOR:

Brother of the bride

Of Chief O'BYRNE.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Go tell him his request

Is granted ere he gives it verbal form.

Ask him to stay and be my guest.

[EXIT PAGE]

Before

My father went to London, he convened

His councillors at Drogheda, and there

He gravely handed me his sword of state.

"Wear thou this sword till I return," he said,

"The symbol of the King's authority.

Upon the path of justice keep thy feet.

Be guided by my council. Thou art young,

Though wise, and needest their mature advice.

I am now in the eventide of life,

And thou art in its forenoon. Act thy part

So that thy day, howe'er at times o'ercast,

In honor's mellow sunset shall decline.

Farewell, my son. We nevermore may meet

This side the grave, May God thy footsteps keep!"

MONSIGNOR:

A dignified farewell, with sorrow tinged,
As if the shadow of impending woe
O'ercast his thought.

SILKEN THOMAS:

His voice was trembling, too,
As though his heart, that stout and fearless heart,
Quailed at the prospect of approaching doom.
My own is troubled since he went away.

MONSIGNOR:

But is there aught to fear?

SILKEN THOMAS:

Naught that I know.

MONSIGNOR:

Then let the buoyancy of early youth,
Which still is yours, assert itself again.

SILKEN THOMAS:

The stately functions that I now discharge
O'ertax my limited capacity.
They are, besides, quite foreign to my taste.

MONSIGNOR:

That thou possessest all the needed gifts
Which could distinction bring to one who fills
The post that now is thine, oft have I heard
Since I arrived from Spain, a brief sojourn
To make amongst my relatives; and that
Thou art not only wise beyond thy years,
But that thou hast already given proof
That thou art motivated, in thy public acts.
By that rare intuition which, combined
With something of the science and the art
Of higher politics, proclaims the statesman.

SILKEN THOMAS:

If such a good report of me is current
Amongst our people, 'tis not merited.
'Tis to my father that the credit's due.
A born aristocrat, of lineage long,
His sympathies, his heart, have ever been
With that democracy which still persists
Since classic Greece's ancient, golden age;
And shall persist, I do believe, throughout
The future ages of humanity.

MONSIGNOR:

Thou art acquainted, then, with classic lore?

SILKEN THOMAS:

Yes; I have read much, and have studied, too,
The volumes which I thought were worth the pains.
But though no small amount of time I've spent
Acquiring knowledge, wisdom, culture, from
The silent voices of the lettered dead,
Yet they are not congenial to a man
With such a temperament as I have. Spain!
Didst thou assert thou hast arrived from Spain,
That land with which we Irish have so long
Had friendly and commercial intercourse?

MONSIGNOR:

Yes; in that country now my duties lie.
What other portion of the Master's field
I next must labor in, I know not yet.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Each has his own appointed course to run.
There is at times a tumult in my heart
That bodes for me a course of noisy strife.
The battlefield is my ancestral home;
The measured tramp of troops, the clash of steel,

The musket's rattle, and the cannon's roar,
The groans of dying foes—these martial sounds,
And these alone, make music in my ear.
But thine, my friend, is bloodless warfare; thine
The peaceful conquests of rebellious souls,
Who, in thy triumph, and their own defeat,
Unfeignedly rejoice.

[*Taking MONSIGNOR'S arm*]

Come; be my guest.

[*EXEUNT*]

RADLEY: (*Leaving his hiding-place.*) I have a two-fold object in paying this brief visit to Maynooth. In the first place, I want to make this serious-minded and highly-gifted youth believe that I am a loyal friend of his father; and in the second, I want to study him a bit, for my own satisfaction. His character perplexes me. He is only a boy in years; but in demeanor and also, I have been told, in conversation, he is a man. How lucky I was to come at the moment I did, when that prelatiical friend of the Wicklow rebel was asking him for an order for his release! I must intercept that order by all means.

[*Enter ALLEN, Secretary of the Lord Deputy's Council, Dublin.*]

ALLEN: You here, LORD RADLEY! This is an unexpected meeting.

RADLEY: Now that our plot against his father is nearing success I thought it advisable to have a pleasant chat with Lord Thomas, with the object of disarming any suspicion he may have entertained about me, and of giving him the impression that I am one

of the best friends and sincerest admirers his father has.

ALLEN: (*smiling*) It won't take *you* long to make him believe that.

RADLEY: What pressing business brings you here?

ALLEN: It *is* urgent, but not very important. I mislaid an order-in-council which I should have presented to him with others for his signature after the last meeting; and as I don't expect him back in Dublin this week I came here with it. I went to your residence a couple of days ago to have a talk with you, but was informed that you were out of town. Another amorous adventure, I suppose?

RADLEY: Your supposition is correct.

ALLEN: Anything special?

RADLEY: Very special—a young woman who is more attractive to me than any I have ever met before.

ALLEN: You are in luck.

RADLEY: I am, and I am not.

ALLEN: A dubious phrase.

RADLEY: It is a dubious case.

ALLEN: She is young, you say. Is she married or single—maid, wife or widow?

RADLEY: She is all three.

ALLEN: You are trying to humbug me.

RADLEY: I'm not. Let me explain. I was after some other game when I accidentally saw her alone. I tried to engage her in conversation; but she repulsed me with that exasperating, frigid air which the vicious as well as the virtuous can put on. Her disdain made her all the more charming, all the more desirable, to me.

ALLEN: That is only natural.

RADLEY: But there is an indefinable something about her that has thrown a passionate spell over me. To possess that Irish Diana would be for me the very acme of pleasure. You can help me to accomplish my purpose.

ALLEN: I! How?

RADLEY: I learned that she was to be married the following day. I made arrangements to carry her off. The plan I adopted failed of success by a mere accident. Her bridegroom, a rebel chief, happened to come along just as I was about to carry her to the coach that I had waiting nearby. There was a sharp scuffle; and we made a prisoner of him. He is in Newgate Jail, Dublin, now, charged by me with treason against his majesty the King. As you know, we can imprison any number of these Irishmen, high or low, on that charge, and keep them in jail as long as we like without any trial at all. This, however, is an exception. He is a personal friend of Lord Thomas.

ALLEN: But what can I do to help your amorous enterprise along?

RADLEY: If this Irish chieftain were out of my way I feel confident that I would succeed.

ALLEN: How do you propose to get him out of your way?

RADLEY: By having him hanged or beheaded, of course. All you have to do is to send an order as coming from the Council to the Governor of the Jail, and he will be sent to the block or to the gallows.

ALLEN: The thought of taking a human life in such a cold-blooded way makes me shudder.

RADLEY: But he's only an Irishman.

ALLEN: Even so. It would be—murder.

RADLEY: You are too scrupulous for these hardy times.

ALLEN: I have a conscience.

RADLEY: An inconvenient thing for an ambitious statesman to have. Since you are so chicken-hearted, I'll shoulder all the blame and the guilt.

ALLEN: But I would be morally responsible nevertheless. Hire an informer to swear his life away, and then you alone will be responsible.

RADLEY: As I have said, he is a personal friend of Lord Thomas, who will order his release if he hears that he is locked up. I want to have him put out of the way as soon as possible. We can easily get up an excuse to satisfy Lord Thomas—if he is still at liberty then himself. You know what I mean.

ALLEN: Yes, yes. If things go our way in London it will not be long before he, too, finds himself in a dungeon in the Tower. But can you not hit upon another way of carrying out your plan in regard to this Hibernian Hebe?

RADLEY: There is absolutely no other way than to get rid of her husband without delay. I am really astonished at your hesitation. In view of our intimate relations of late, I had fully counted upon your friendly aid.

ALLEN: It is my friendship for you, as well as my respect for human life, that makes me so reluctant to accede to your request. Let me earnestly advise you to desist from this evil purpose of yours—to curb your reckless passion—before it is too late. Reflect upon the folly, the peril—

RADLEY: It is no use to talk to me like that. The cup

that holds the blissful draught lies within my reach, and I am determined to drink it, no matter what may be the consequences to myself.

ALLEN: I am sorry to hear you say that. Since, however, you are fully resolved upon taking this course, I shall give you the order you require—on one condition; and that is, that you give this unfortunate man a chance to save his life; that you try hard to devise a less desperate plan to gain your end.

RADLEY: I shall gladly comply with that condition. An idea has just occurred to me—a scheme which, I think, will succeed. But I want to be armed with that order to the Governor of Newgate in case it should fail.

ALLEN: You shall have it; but I sincerely hope you will not use it.

(ALLEN starts to go off, but turns around)

Have you seen Skeffington or Butler of late?

RADLEY: Yes; both of them.

ALLEN: Have they received any news from London?

RADLEY: They have been furnished with some information that I have received, but from another source.

ALLEN: Then the Earl of Kildare is really imprisoned in the Tower?

RADLEY: Yes; and his death sentence, I have further heard, is expected to be pronounced in a day or two.

ALLEN: Good! Then Skeffington will soon be restored to the position of Lord Deputy.

RADLEY: He will; and he is very anxious to hold that office again. Butler is highly pleased at the prospect; for, although he is a nephew of Lord Kildare,

he remembers that Kildare was his father's bitterest foe.

ALLEN: It will do my heart good when this proud and haughty Earl of Kildare has been laid low. But I tell you frankly I don't feel very sanguine as to the success of our plot against him.

RADLEY: You have been pessimistic all along.

ALLEN: How can I help it when I know that for years the Earl of Kildare has enjoyed the friendship of the King and the good opinion of his majesty's councillors, in spite of his traitorous truckling to the native chieftains, to two of whom—O'Connor and O'Carroll—his two daughters are married with his full consent—nay, with his open encouragement.

RADLEY: But the King has been made aware of all the facts. Besides, his majesty, I have been told on good authority, not satisfied with being "Lord" of this country, wishes to acquire a loftier title; and when next parliament meets in Dublin City it will proclaim him King of Ireland. Such a change, you know as well as I do, Kildare would have vigorously opposed; and the King has been informed, they say, that the reason he would oppose it is this, that he has long desired to make himself King of Ireland—which is not true.

ALLEN: That must have touched the King in a raw spot.

RADLEY: How could it do otherwise?

ALLEN: I feel more confident now than before. Had you not better come along with me?

RADLEY: No. It is better that we should not appear to be on very friendly terms with each other. When

men enter into a great conspiracy they should be careful to shun alert Suspicion's furtive glance.

ALLEN: (*going off*) You are right. You are an ideal conspirator.

RADLEY: "Old Reprobate" that rebel chief called me! Old? Do I indeed look old? Ha! Let me see.

[He produces a pocket mirror, and scans his reflected features eagerly, turning his face from right to left, and *vice versa*. Then he holds the mirror at arm's length and soliloquizes]:

That Irish rascal spoke the truth—the simple, bitter truth. How is it that I have not noticed it before? Is it because nobody has had the—bad taste—the audacity—the impudence—to tell me that I look as if were—growing old. (*He looks into the mirror again, smiles at himself first, and then frowns*). I see it now. Whenever I have looked at myself in a mirror I have smiled, by force of habit; and thus those accursed wrinkles and other facial deformities caused by relentless Time have escaped my notice. (*Looks at himself again*) Why, the very wrinkles which are caused by our smiles serve to emphasize our frowns! When did age begin to tell upon me—upon my face, I mean, for I am as young in heart and feeling now as I was twenty-five years ago? (*He returns the mirror abruptly to his pocket with a frown*) It's too late now to inquire into that. The sad fact remains: I am getting old. And youthful beauty, of which I am so ardent an admirer, seldom accords its favors to the middle-aged, and never to the old, without being influenced by the possession of wealth by the recipient. (*He starts as he gazes at some distant*

object). That looks like a messenger with Lord Thomas's order for the lease of O'BYRNE. If he is, gold may buy the message he is carrying, as it has often bought such things before.

[EXIT]

[Enter MUSICIANS.]

BARNEY (*the Fiddler*): What a grand place this estate of Maynooth is!

JERRY (*the Bagpiper*): And it's a grand man that owns it, too.

MIKE (*the Harpist*): Faith, it's true for you. And the Earl of Kildare, when he is called to his reward in the next world, will have a worthy successor in Lord Thomas, by all accounts. Just think of a boy like that being Lord Deputy—holding the most powerful position in the land.

JERRY: He's well able to fill the position, they say. So it appears that the Earl of Kildare knew what he was doing when he put Lord Thomas in his place before he went to London.

BARNEY: Didn't Lord Thomas enjoy our playing at the O'BYRNE wedding?

JERRY: He did indeed. That's why he sent for us to-day, no doubt. And we may be sure that he'll treat us well.

MIKE: I hear that Shawn O'Dwyer is going to marry Bessy O'Toole. He's a lucky gorsoon. Bessy's father will give him that fine farm near the woods with her.

JERRY: That fine farm near the woods! That's not a fine farm at all. It's a wilderness on a little

scale. Why, you couldn't raise enough on it to feed a goat. If a rabbit wanted to spend half a day there he'd have to take his lunch with him.

BARNEY: It's a very poor bit of ground, but with perseverance and time,—

JERRY: With perseverance and time an Irish snail would reach Jerusalem. Did you hear what happened to Old Flint-Heart, the Sassenah landlord, after he died?

BARNEY: No.

JERRY: He had the brazen impudence to knock at the gate of Heaven. St. Peter recognized him, but would not condescend to talk to him; so he sent one of his clerks to the gate to ask Old Flint-Heart what he wanted there. He answered that he wanted to get into Heaven. St. Peter said: "Ask him if he ever did a good deed in his life." The clerk obeyed. Old Flint-Heart could remember only one good deed that he had done. He bought a basket of apples from a poor farmer's son; and as the boy had no money in his pocket he couldn't give him his change, which was only a very small sum. "Keep it," said Old Flint-Heart. "And that's the only good deed he has to his credit during his long life on earth?" said St. Peter, with indignation. "Ask him how much the change was; give it back to him; and let him go to—Purgatory."

BARNEY: That reminds me of what I heard about old Shawn Duffy and Father McGrah. Shawn got very sick; his condition became so bad that they sent for the priest to give him the last Sacraments. He was never any good, the same Shawn. When he was hard up he would steal the pennies off a dead man's

eyes or the cross from an ass's back, if he could. Well, after he received the Sacraments he said to Father McGrah: "Father, I wish you had the key of Heaven with you." "Why?" asked the priest. "So that you could let me in," said Shawn. "Faith," said Father McGrah, "it might be better for you if I had the key of the other place." "How is that, Father?" asked Shawn. The priest said to him quietly: "So that I could let you out."

[*They play*]

JERRY: Sing us a song, Barney, for a change.

MIKE: Yes, do, Barney.

[*BARNEY sings*]:

For pretty girls, as true as they are charming,
The Emerald Isle has always been renowned.
None fairer, purer, or more tender-hearted,
In all the world can e'er be found.
But there is one who to my heart is dearest,
Who more than all the rest of them I prize:
She whom it is my fondest hope to marry,
Linking my life to hers for evermore,
Making our home an earthly paradise,
The colleen with the laughing eyes.

Her glossy hair is darker than the raven,
Her neck and arms are whiter than the swan;
Her sweet, moist lips are crimson like ripe cherries;
She walks as graceful as a fawn.
But—best of all—her goodness far surpasses
Her beauty, as the sun, in mid-day skies,
Outclasses, in its everlasting radiance,
The stars that every night above us rise,
Oh, I am longing to my breast to clasp her,
My colleen with the laughing eyes.

SCENE II.—In Newgate Jail. Door in center. When this door is opened, the iron bars of a dungeon are disclosed, O'BYRNE behind them. Governor Taunton of the Jail is slowing pacing to and fro, his head bowed in meditation.

[*Enter LORD RADLEY*]

RADLEY: Has any letter or message been delivered here for O'BYRNE, the rebel Chief?

TAUNTON: No, LORD RADLEY. But I have received from the council an order to have him beheaded.

RADLEY: I have just had a conference with the Lord Deputy about the unfortunate man; and I want to talk to him in private. Will you please unlock this door, and retire for a few minutes?

TAUNTON: Certainly, LORD RADLEY.

[TAUNTON unlocks the door in the center, disclosing the iron-barred door of a dungeon. O'BYRNE is seen behind the iron-barred door.]

[*Exit TAUNTON, saying, aside:*]

There's something about LORD RADLEY that I don't like. He seems to be gloating over this prisoner's awful doom. What is his reason, I wonder?

RADLEY: (*to O'BYRNE*) You know that you have been condemned to die, and have only a few hours to live?

O'BYRNE: The Governor of the Jail has so informed me. When I asked him what is the crime that I am charged with, he said "high treason." That is a ridiculous charge. When LORD THOMAS hears about it——

RADLEY: He knows all about it now.

O'BYRNE: Why, his father and I are friends.

RADLEY: Were friends, you should say. LORD THOMAS is even more scrupulously loyal to King Henry than his father is, and he loathes the very name of treason. (TAUNTON *pceps in at one side of the stage and listens*). As I have said, you have but a few hours more of life. You surely realize that there is absolutely no hope for you. The decree has been issued by the Council of State, and ratified by LORD THOMAS. The headsman is already preparing to exercise the sentence. (O'BYRNE *groans*). But it happens to be in my power, as your accuser——

O'BYRNE: My false accuser!

RADLEY: To save your life—ay, and to set you free. All you have to do is to listen to the proposition I am going to make. It is this. If, when I bring your bride, MOIRA, here, you will tell her that you give up all claim to her and bid her place herself under my protection.—

O'BYRNE: Stop, you ruffianly Sassenah! You must be a devil in human shape; otherwise you could not come to me at such an hour with such a request. Oh for a moment of freedom! If I had I would pluck that vile, black heart from your breast and throw it to the dogs! Good Heaven! Could there be a bitterer death than this?

RADLEY: Death! But you can easily avoid it. If you do not take this opportunity to save your life and regain your freedom, you are a fool and a suicide as well.

O'BYRNE: You cursed, hell-bent scoundrel, go away! (Turning his back to RADLEY) I'll listen to you no longer.

RADLEY: Fret, and fume, and rage as you will, MOIRA will be mine. She is in my house now—not as a captive, mark you, but as a willing guest.

O'BYRNE: (*quickly turning his face to RADLEY*) It is as false as hell!

RADLEY: This bravado will leave you after I go, and you will be very sorry that you did not accept my offer. But it will be too late. Die, you Keltic rebel, die!

O'BYRNE: (*shaking his fist at RADLEY*) Death! Yes, a thousand deaths before MOIRA's honor or my manhood should be stained by such a diabolical bargain.

[*Enter from the side of the stage opposite to that from which TAUNTON is peeping and listening, GERARD, a jailer in the secret pay of RADLEY, who motions to him not to speak.*]

TAUNTON: (*aside*) What! GERARD here? He should be at his post elsewhere. Is he, too, in this hellish plot?

RADLEY: (*to GERARD*) Close this door.

[GERARD closes it]

RADLEY: (*speaking to GERARD*) That pretty wench should soon be here, with the letter that she has obtained from the Lord Deputy ordering TAUNTON to liberate O'BYRNE. What his youthful excellency will think or say when he finds out that his previous order to TAUNTON was not delivered, I do not know. He will doubtless be very angry. Now, don't forget what I told you. Open this door now and call O'BYRNE to the bars. Tell him that you are a special messenger from the Lord Deputy,

who offers him his freedom on the condition to which his wife has agreed in order to secure his immediate liberation. The condition is that, since the Lord Deputy has resolved to give the whole country a just government, O'BYRNE must pledge his word of honor that he will not join in any uprising against it, so long as it continues to be fair to all the people. Assure him that his wife is anxious that he should accept the proposal; then close the door. He is sure to accept it. When his wife comes—you must hurry up, for she may be here at any moment—she will have a letter which she has received from LORD THOMAS, whom she has visited in reference to her husband's imprisonment. It will be addressed to TAUNTON.

GERARD: I hope she won't come before I talk to him. I'll have to be quick about this business; for I must hasten back to my post. If the Governor finds that I am absent from my post he will want to know the reason. He may dismiss me on the spot; for he has a quick temper.

RADLEY: Don't worry over that. I shall take care of you. Well, take the letter from her, and assure her that you will at once give it to the Governor. You, of course, are to appear not to know who she is. Then tell her, as a simple matter of Jail gossip, that an Irish Chieftain named THE O'BYRNE is to be released tomorrow, having agreed, as the condition of regaining his freedom, to hand over his wife to an English nobleman who is in love with her.

GERARD: Yes, yes. I have got off by heart the words you wrote for me to say. She will refuse to believe what I tell her. Then I'll call O'BYRNE to the bars,

and in her hearing ask him: "Do you accept that condition about your getting released? Your wife wants you to accept it. She is here." He will, of course, say that he accepts it. After that I am to close the door immediately, so as not to give them a chance to talk to each other.

RADLEY: Exactly. You will play your part perfectly. Now I shall go to Governor TAUNTON and keep him in conversation until you have had time to carry out the scheme.

[Exit RADLEY on the side opposite to that where TAUNTON is listening]

TAUNTON: *(aside)* He will not be able to find me. I'll stay here and see this devilish plot carried out so far that it will become necessary for me to interfere. Then I'll place these two villains in cells and keep them there until I communicate with the Lord Deputy.

[GERARD opens the door, calls O'BYRNE, and whispers to him for a few minutes.]

O'BYRNE: *(in an audible tone.)* I accept the condition.

[Enter MOIRA with a letter in her hand]

MOIRA: *(breathlessly to GERARD)* This is a letter from the Lord Deputy to Governor TAUNTON. Place it in his hands, please, without delay.

GERARD: *(bowing)* There will be no delay. And as he is likely to be busy now, you may have to wait a little while for his reply. There is a parlor here in which you can be seated.

[Exit GERARD and MOIRA. In a minute they return.]

MOIRA: (*Excitedly to GERARD*) Insult me not, I warn you! If you dare——

GERARD: Heaven forbid that I should insult a fair and noble lady like you! Stand there a minute.

[*He leads her to a part of the stage some distance from the outer door of O'BYRNE'S cell.*]
Then he opens the door and calls the prisoner to the bars.

(*To O'BYRNE*): Do you agree to the condition named? Your wife is present. She may like to hear from your own lips your answer. Speak out clearly.

O'BYRNE: Yes; I accept it.

[*GERARD hastily closes the door.*]

GERARD: You have heard his words?

MOIRA (*pressing her hands to her eyes*):

O kindly Heaven! have pity on me now.

But have I really heard those words aright?

Alas, I have. It surely was his voice.

[*throwing up her hands.*]

O God! that I should ever live to hear

That awful proposition from the man

To whom I gave my hand and heart. O Heaven!

GERARD: He told me to tell you that, as he would be willing to give his life to save yours, *you* ought to make the same sacrifice to save *his*. The headsman is already here. Your husband's life depends on your decision.

MOIRA: Then it is true. Oh, horror, it is true!

[*she pauses*]

To save my life he freely would give his;

And should I pause to make the sacrifice
 He bids me make to save his life? Shall I
 Less generous, less self-sacrificing, be
 For his sake than he surely would for me?
 But would it be a fair exchange? His life
 Bartered against—I shudder at the thought
 Of what such bargain would entail to me.

[*Enter TAUNTON and RADLEY*]

The degradation of my womanhood,
 The forfeit of my honor—dearer far
 To me than life itself. *It shall not be;*
 My honor as a woman and a wife
 To me is far more precious than the life
 And liberty of him who won my heart.

[TAUNTON walks to where GERARD *is standing*;
places himself beside him, and eyes him angrily.]

RADLEY (*to TAUNTON*): This woman is a lunatic. I
 know her well. Her late hallucination, under which
 she is now laboring, is that she is married, and that
 her husband is the rebel Chief O'BYRNE.

MOIRA:

This is a fiendish lie! Ha! I recognize you now.
 It is you who tried to abduct me.

[*To TAUNTON*]

Tell me, sir, his name.

RADLEY: Heed not her ravings. Place her in a room
 whence she can not escape. Tonight I'll come for
 her, and safely reconduct her to her home.

TAUNTON: Lady, you are the victim of a plot as vile
 as was ever concocted by the basest scoundrel that
 ever walked the earth. Your husband is as faithful,

true, and loving as he ever was. He has rejected with scorn the condition these two cunning scoundrels would make you believe he has accepted. I have foiled their plot.

MOIRA: Thank Heaven for that! Oh, let me speak to him.

[Enter SILKEN THOMAS, with four body-guards and MONSIGNOR.]

MOIRA (*To SILKEN THOMAS*):

My husband still is here.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Ha! Treachery!

[*To TAUNTON*]

Upon whose order is he here confined?

TAUNTON: Upon LORD RADLEY'S.

SILKEN THOMAS (*drawing his sword*): RADLEY! Is he here?

[RADLEY averts his face and walks stealthily towards the door. MONSIGNOR converses inaudibly with MOIRA.]

SILKEN THOMAS (*excitedly to TAUNTON*):

What does this mean? My orders set at naught!

Twice have I written you, with my own hand,

Commands to liberate the Chief O'BYRNE.

TAUNTON: They did not reach me, my Lord, I swear to you.

MOIRA, (*pointing to RADLEY, who is crouching near the door, at which two body-guards of SILKEN THOMAS are standing*):

There stands the ruffian who insulted me,
And with his minions brought my husband here

And even now gave orders to this man

[*Pointing to TAUNTON*]

To lock me in a cell until tonight,

When he would come and bear me to his home.

O'DONNELL (*To MOIRA*):

Are you quite sure 'tis he?

MOIRA:

How could I err

In such a case as this?

MONSIGNOR (*To TAUNTON*):

Have you not heard

What the Lord Deputy has said to you?

Give THE O'BYRNE his liberty at once.

[*TAUNTON opens the outer door and proceeds to open the inner, iron-barred one; MONSIGNOR converses with MOIRA.*]

O'DONNELL (*drawing his sword and addressing*

SILKEN THOMAS):

Pray, pardon me, my lord.

Soil not your sword with his base, hag-bred blood.

Let me dispatch him. To my sister he

Offered the worst of insults.

SILKEN THOMAS (*drawing back a little*):

Let him die

The death he merits. Headsman, ax and block

Shall be his portion—

[*To jailer, who has the key to the iron-barred door*]

Quick; release O'BYRNE,

And let this bawdy miscreant take his place

Until the headsman comes.

TAUNTON:

The headsman's here.

LORD RADLEY had him summoned for this man.

[Opens the cell door, through which O'BYRNE steps forth, and, seeing MOIRA, embraces her.]

SILKEN THOMAS:

It was his own beheading he arranged.

And let him die at once. You hear? At once!

MONSIGNOR (*To SILKEN THOMAS*):

Accord this wretched sinner ample time

For penitence and the Sacraments, my lord.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Such timely mercy he does not deserve;

But he shall have it. TAUNTON, see to this.

[TAUNTON and O'DONNELL seize RADLEY, and push him into the cell. TAUNTON locks the doors.]

[Exit TAUNTON]

O'BYRNE (*To SILKEN THOMAS*):

Accept my gratitude.—

SILKEN THOMAS:

Nay, thank me not.

It was my simple duty to prevent

The shedding of a guiltless brother's blood;

For brothers we are now in patriotism.

[Shakes O'BYRNE's Hand]

O'BYRNE: Ay! And the brotherhood of patriotism is higher and holier than the brotherhood of blood.

SILKEN THOMAS: You had better go and breathe the pure air and otherwise refresh yourself. You need it after your horrible experience here.

[Exeunt O'BYRNE, O'DONNELL and MOIRA, bowing and smiling to SILKEN THOMAS.]

[END OF ACT II.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Chamber of the Council of State, St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin. A long table in the center with books and manuscripts upon it, and chairs arranged at each side, with a larger one at the head, for the President. SILKEN THOMAS alone is slowly walking up and down, his head bowed and his hand pressed to his forehead, apparently absorbed in serious thought.

[*Enter MONSIGNOR.*]

MONSIGNOR:

Thou lookest ill, my lord, or else thou art
Immersed in deep and solemn meditation.

SILKEN THOMAS:

So many rumors of my father's death
Have reached my ears that I begin to fear
They may be based on truth.

MONSIGNOR:

What do they say?

SILKEN THOMAS:

That my dear father has been put to death
By order of the King.

MONSIGNOR:

Whence comes the news?

SILKEN THOMAS:

From various sources.

MONSIGNOR:

All authentic?

SILKEN THOMAS:

No.

MONSIGNOR:

Such vague and unconfirmed intelligence
Deserves but scanty credence. Evil news
Spreads faster much than good. Why dost thou not
Send o'er to London some one thou can'st trust
To ascertain the truth?

SILKEN THOMAS:

That I have done—

One of my most intelligent body-guards,
Upon whose tact and prudence I rely.
And, with impatience 'waiting his return,
My anxious soul with dark presentiments
Is much perturbed. Besides, my omens say
That I shall never more my father see.

MONSIGNOR:

Omens and augurs should receive no heed
From cultured minds like thine. The cares of state
Depress thy youthful spirits. Thou shouldst take
Some wholesome recreation that befits
Thy years and station and thy present needs.
Be not discomforted by gloomy news,
Or darkened outlook. Standing as thou dost
Upon the threshold of a manhood bright,
Confront the future with unflinching gaze,
And optimistic heart; and bear in mind:
We all must take the bitter with the sweet,
The showers with the sunshine, in this world.
There are no shadows where there is no light—
Nay, is not Life's fair landscape made complete
By these same shadows? Never give up hope,
Though even Heaven itself should seem to frown.

SILKEN THOMAS:

The toils of state are irksome, it is true;

And fain would I exchange them, if I could,
For more congenial tasks; but duty calls,
And I must execute her stern behests,
Whatever be the cost.

[Draws and brandishes his sword]

Oh, how I yearn
To lead a charge upon the battlefield!
To rush with fury on a hated foe!

MONSIGNOR:

But they who love the sword shall meet their death
By its keen thrust.

SILKEN THOMAS:

What matters it, my friend,
If battling for a righteous cause they die?

[Draws nearer to MONSIGNOR]

Should foreign hordes our native land invade,
And threatened Liberty for help appeal,
Wouldst thou advise us meekly to submit,
Like sapless cowards, to a tyrant's yoke,
And preach the sacredness of might enthroned,
And the enormous crime of armed revolt?

MONSIGNOR (*Solemnly*):

Life here below is not the highest good,
To battle for the right is meritorious;
Among the virtues patriotism stands high.

SILKEN THOMAS:

For this concession, guarded though it be,
To that pure patriotism which hazards all
For Freedom's holy cause, I thank thee, friend.

[Sheathes his sword]

*[Enter one of SILKEN THOMAS' body-guards,
wearing a troubled look.]*

SILKEN THOMAS (*eagerly and quickly*): Back from London? Good! What news do you bring me about my father?

BODYGUARD: Be calm, my lord. I have been seeking you for hours, and just heard that you were here.

SILKEN THOMAS (*excitedly*): Speak out. I am no woman. I can hear the worst without a falter.

BODYGUARD: When your father landed in London he was at once taken to the Tower by a military escort (*He Pauses*).

SILKEN THOMAS: I can read in your troubled countenance the ghastly message you forbear to deliver to me suddenly. I appreciate your kindly consideration of my feelings. My father lives no more!

BODYGUARD: You have surmised the awful truth.

SILKEN THOMAS: He has been murdered by the King's command!

MONSIGNOR (*to BODYGUARD*): Is that true?

BODYGUARD: Alas, it is only too true.

MONSIGNOR (*gazing upward*):

Eternal rest, and light, and peace be his!

[*To SILKEN THOMAS*]

Accept my sympathy; and bear this blow
With Christian fortitude, as doth become
A Christian soldier, as thou art.

BODYGUARD: A titled English spy, who has lately been conspiring with the foes that your father had among his councillors, has been sending the King false reports about him. Here is one of his concoctions which, having been mislaid, came into my possession by mere chance.

[*Hands a parchment to SILKEN THOMAS.*]

SILKEN THOMAS (*reading*):

"Our plot has been strengthened in an important particular. I have forwarded to his Majesty documents purporting to prove that Kildare has been for years engaged in the treasonable attempt to substitute his own for the King's authority in this dominion, and to induce the members of Parliament to agree to proclaim him King of Ireland at their next session. This ought to rouse his Majesty from his too prolonged attitude of benevolent hesitation, and to lead him to decree the immediate death of Kildare. Take special pains to ascertain what his Majesty's decision is; and, having carefully informed yourself upon this point, lose no time in letting me know what it is." "RADLEY"

Radley! The miscreant I've condemned to die!
That lecherous minion of a murderous King,
Is, then, the real slayer of my father,
His cowardly weapon the informer's lie;
If I could make him die a hundred deaths,
Justice would not be fully satisfied.

[*He pauses and paces up and down. Then,
with a sudden start:*]

Why this affliction do I calmly bear?
What stills the 'vengeful voice of injured blood,
That should be clamoring now? What frigid spell
Benumbs the impulse that should fire my breast?

[*Raises both hands and looks up to Heaven*]

Oh for thy direst thunders, Heaven! to smite
The monarch guilty of this bloody deed,
And devastate the kingdom where he rules!

[*He pauses*]

MONSIGNOR:

The noblest way to wreak condign revenge
Is to forgive.

SILKEN THOMAS (*drily*):

A vengeance so sublime
Might well beseem a saint, but not a soldier.

[*A slight pause*]

My father slain by order of the King!—

[*Enter DE LA HIDE*]

DE LA HIDE:

And thou, thine uncles, and that angel-boy,
Thine only brother, to that cruel fate
Have likewise been condemned, I have just learned.

[*MONSIGNOR and the BODYGUARD speak in
whispers to each other.*]

Recall to memory what thy father said
Ere on his fatal voyage he embarked;
And by the counsel of his trusted friends
In thy next move be guided. Give us time
For due reflection on this crisis grave
That now confronts our country. Rest assured,
In all emergencies which may arise,
That on my friendly aid thou canst rely
With fullest confidence.

SILKEN THOMAS:

I needed not
This opportune assurance. Thou, Sir James,
Hast always been my father's dearest friend
And truest counsellor.

DE LA HIDE:

Now to his son,
The pride and treasure of his noble heart,
That friendship I transfer.

SILKEN THOMAS:

And now, my friends,

With my great grief I would be left alone.

MONSIGNOR (*going off with BODYGUARD and*

DE LA HIDE):

Our heartfelt sympathy and condolence!

'Tis natural thou wouldst be now alone.

And thy desire, my lord, we shall respect.

God grant thee fortitude in this dark hour!

[EXEUNT]

SILKEN THOMAS (*after a pause, with animation and drawing his sword*):

The murder of a father to avenge,

The lives of menaced kindred to protect,

A motherland from tyranny to free!

A threefold mission this that should command

The fervid service of a knightly heart;

A triple cause that should transform a coward

Into a hero, and give feeble age

The dash and strength of full-developed youth.

[*Bows his head in evident anguish. Then, as if he has resolved upon a course of action, he raises his head suddenly, and walks swiftly out.*]

[*Enter LORD CHANCELLOR CROMER, with his wig and his ermine on.*]

LORD CHANCELLOR: H'm! I am again the first to arrive, notwithstanding all that I have been saying to my brother councillors about the advisableness as well as the docorum of punctuality.

[*Enter a COUNCILLOR.*]

COUNCILLOR (*thinking himself alone*): Who talks of punctuality now, I would like to know?

CROMER: I have just been saying something to myself about it.

COUNCILLOR: Oh, I beg your pardon! I had not seen you when I came in, but thought that I was the first arrival. I hope we won't be kept here long today, as I want to go hunting. This is fine weather for it, and game, I am told, is plentiful.

CROMER: The length of our proceedings will, of course, depend upon their importance.

COUNCILLOR: I wish they always did.

CROMER: They always do.

COUNCILLOR: They never do. They are invariably too long.

CROMER: Pardon me. You are mistaken.

COUNCILLOR: I am not. There is too much rhetoric indulged in and too little practical business transacted at our meetings, as a rule; and I, for one, am determined to stand it no longer. I intend to bring the matter up when there is a full meeting.

CROMER: You are casting a reflection upon me——

[*Enter another COUNCILLOR*]

FIRST COUNCILLOR: I certainly am, and you deserve it for your long-windedness.

SECOND COUNCILLOR: Come now, my friends; let's have no squabbling. Always try to compromise, and you'll make things easier for yourself and others.

CROMER: He says we take up too much time by our deliberations at this council board; that I am largely to blame for it. I feel sure——

FIRST COUNCILLOR: He knows that I am right.

SECOND COUNCILLOR: You both take opposite views of the subject, I see. It is therefore a case for com-

promise. Let us postpone the discussion of it until some other time, so that we may be able to approach the consideration of it in a calmer and a more conciliatory spirit.

[*Enter SIR JAMES DE LA HIDE and several other COUNCILLORS, followed by ALLEN, Secretary of the Council, with a bundle of manuscripts under his arm. All sit at the table, ALLEN's seat being next to that of CROMER, the Lord Chancellor.*]

CROMER (*reading a small manuscript after talking privately with ALLEN*): Since we met together here before, several important things have happened. The cause of law and order has made great progress; the mutterings of discontent and disloyalty are seldom heard; and a wave of loyalty to our illustrious King is sweeping over the land.

DE LA HIDE: That is not true.

CROMER: Do not interrupt me while I am making a speech.

DE LA HIDE: You are not making a speech; you are reading a prepared address. If you had made those assertions while you were being carried away by an oratorical torrent, I might feel inclined to overlook your prevarications. But since you have written them with cold deliberation in your private chambers, I must in the name of truth protest against them.

CROMER (*reading*): In addition to these gratifying circumstances, I am glad to be in a position to say that——

DE LA HIDE: I insist upon your withdrawing the falsehoods that you have uttered——

CROMER: Falsehoods! Dare you to accuse me of having uttered falsehoods?

DE LA HIDE: I do. And you know they are falsehoods.

[Several COUNCILLORS speak loudly to each other with gestures of excitement.]

SECOND COUNCILLOR: This is eminently a discussion where a compromise is in order. I respectfully suggest that you, my LORD CHANCELLOR, re-state in a modified form what you have said, and that you, SIR JAMES DE LA HIDE, do likewise.

A COUNCILLOR (*solemnly*): Let us not forget who we are and what we are: the members of this exalted body—this Supreme Council of State—appointed by his most gracious majesty the King. We should uphold the dignity of the noble lord who is the President of this Council. Let him continue his important and interesting speech, and I appeal to all present not to allow him to be interrupted again.

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR: Why, you are jeopardizing the chance of a compromise being agreed to.

CROMER: Well, in order to expedite matters and to promote harmony, I accept the suggestion of a compromise.

A COUNCILLOR (*solemnly*): No; no. I object to your making that concession to disloyalty.

DE LA HIDE: Withdraw that insinuation and apologize for it.

SEVERAL COUNCILLORS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

A COUNCILLOR: I will not withdraw it.

CROMER: I must rule against you. You will have to withdraw it.

A COUNCILLOR (*pulling a sheet of manuscript from his pocket and reading it*): "Baffled in my conscienti-

ous efforts to promote a policy which, I feel assured, would, if adopted, have the effect of tranquilizing the masses of the rebellious natives of this distracted country, I resign my membership in this council."

DE LA HIDE: You brought that written statement in your pocket. It has nothing to do with what we were discussing. You prepared it for use in some eventuality which has not yet occurred.

A COUNCILLOR (*muddled and angry*): How do you know? (*Rising*)

CROMER: I hope we shall continue to have the benefit of your wisdom and counsel.

DE LA HIDE: His what?

A COUNCILLOR: My decision to resign is unalterable.

CROMER: I am sorry.

[*Exit, hastily, COUNCILLOR.*]

CROMER: Let us proceed quietly. (*Lays down his manuscript*)

DE LA HIDE: I desire to say that it would be a mistake to regard the seeming quietude that prevails in this country for contentment. When a sensitive, quick-witted, and deservedly renowned people are smarting from grievances, what looks like serenity may be the sullen brooding that preludes a fierce revolt.

ONE OF THE COUNCILLORS: But our people have no cause for revolt.

DE LA HIDE: No cause! You must be jesting. Does long continuance justify a cruel wrong or lapse of many years condone a crime?

CROMER: Peace reigns throughout the land.

DE LA HIDE: Apparent peace is oftentimes a state of war that has not yet been formally declared.

ONE OF THE COUNCILLORS: War! Rebellion, you mean. If there are any more attempts at rebellion they will be promptly crushed. I am in favor of having large numbers of soldiers sent here from England without delay. A big army fills the people with fear, and fear is the best preservative of peace.

DE LA HIDE: Justice is a much better preservative of peace than fear.

CROMER: Before we take up routine business I consider it my duty to inform you officially of what you all have doubtless already heard unofficially—namely, the fact that the Earl of Kildare, the Lord Deputy, has been beheaded by order of the King's council.

DE LA HIDE: By order of the King.

CROMER: The young man, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, who has been temporarily acting as Lord Deputy during his father's absence in London, loses that position, of course, by the removal of the Earl. Since you, SIR JAMES DE LA HIDE, are a confidential friend of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, tell us how he acted when he received the news of his father's death.

DE LA HIDE: He had already learned the fatal news when I saw him last.

CROMER: When you spoke of it, did he fume and rage and threaten vengeance on the King?

DE LA HIDE: No. His anguish found expression only in the silent eloquence of grief. His spirit drooped beneath the cruel blow; and as he desired to be left alone with his keen sorrow I came away.

CROMER: Grief lingers not long with youth.

DE LA HIDE: It will with him; for he is exceedingly sensitive. Have you received any news about LORD

THOMAS himself having incurred the displeasure of the King?

CROMER: Unofficially I have. I am told the King is angry with the whole family. LORD THOMAS sent us word that he would meet us here at this hour.

DE LA HIDE: Then he will soon be here.

A COUNCILLOR: I am surprised at the fate that has befallen the Earl of Kildare; for he was a great favorite with his Majesty for many years.

CROMER: His Majesty must have had weighty reasons for sanctioning capital punishment in his case.

DE LA HIDE: Capital punishment! The murder of that great warrior-statesman cries aloud to Heaven for retribution.

CROMER: It is not for us to sit in judgment upon our gracious King. I am afraid of some violent or seditious outbreak on the part of young LORD THOMAS, who has an impulsive and fiery disposition.

DE LA HIDE: Who could justly blame him?

CROMER: Would you palliate disloyalty, that odious crime?

DE LA HIDE: Is disloyalty in a subject a more odious crime than that of a King who has murdered that subject's father?

CROMER: You must not speak like that about the King, whose authority is sacred and supreme.

DE LA HIDE: Then you would extenuate the worst of crimes because the culprit wears a crown? The mightiest monarch that rules in Christendom may be less than the lowest of his subjects in the sight of the angels.

CROMER: I am amazed to hear you talk like that.

DE LA HIDE: Did Almighty God make one moral law for Kings and another for their subjects? Surely the Golden Rule of Christ is for all mankind.

CROMER: We shall proceed to take up the usual business. (*To ALLEN*) Have you any communications for us?

[*ALLEN places several letters before CROMER.*]

DE LA HIDE: Before we leave this tragic subject I suggest that we give formal expression to our regret at the death of the Earl of Kildare, whose sterling virtues and patriotic deeds have added a bright page to the history of his country, and who has bequeathed to his countrymen the fragrant memory of a noble life.

CROMER: I do not think that we should take such a step as that.

A COUNCILLOR: I am strongly opposed to it.

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR: Let us compromise. Let us take up this question later. There is something to be said on both sides.

CROMER: We shall consider it later. (*After a brief whispered conversation with ALLEN*). Reports which were received a few minutes before we came into this room show that the condition of the country is not at all so satisfactory as I had been led to believe that it was. These reports are from trusty English spies. Johnson, for instance, who is making observations in the North, and who has been liberally supplied with money by us to bribe unsuspecting members of the Clans, gives us a rather gloomy account of the outlook up there. He says:

(*Reading one of the dispatches*) "I have secured the information that the followers of O'NEIL and

O'DONNELL have recently received new and large supplies of arms and ammunition, and have been ordered to be prepared to fight at short notice. There is something in the air that I cannot find out; for these men know nothing of it themselves."

A COUNCILLOR: That is serious news.

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR: What can be the reason for the action of those two powerful northern chieftains?

CROMER: We must send some extra spies without delay to assist Johnson in making his investigations. Some grave event is impending. (*Taking up another dispatch and glancing at the signature*). Ah, this report is from Dalby. He is the cleverest——

DE LA HIDE: Scoundrel we have.

CROMER: Please do not interrupt me. He says: "Something very serious is afoot. The clansmen meet in groups in different parts of this district, and hold debates in whispers. They place sentries at certain distances from them, so that no strangers may approach. I have some clues, however, on which I am working, and which, I feel confident, I will follow up with success. Please send me more money."

DE LA HIDE: That fellow is always asking for money.

A COUNCILLOR: I have been told that he is a gambler.

CROMER: He is one of the most reliable of our secret agents.

DE LA HIDE: Hired reformers, you mean.

CROMER (*continuing to read*): "There is a fine estate here adjoining mine. The present possessor is disloyal to the King. It is much more valuable than the one that has been confiscated to me. I want to take possession of it."—

DE LA HIDE: The covetous scoundrel—the thief.

A COUNCILLOR: But all the estates in this country belong to the King.

DE LA HIDE: They do not. They belong to their rightful owners.

CROMER: He covers that very point correctly himself. He goes on to say: "These native Irish have no right to own any properties in the realms of our gracious King. Kindly send me at once the requisite written authority to seize it."

A COUNCILLOR: What audacity! What villainy!

CROMER: Hush! That language is too strong.

THE SAME COUNCILLOR: Too strong! Could any words of denunciation be too strong for a man who wants to steal the property of another, and who desires to obtain from this council an official letter which would legalize his pillage? It is outrageous.

DE LA HIDE: He should be sent to jail for having insulted the members of the Council.

[Several COUNCILLORS hold a brief whispered conversation, some nodding their heads in assent, and others quickly turning their heads from right to left as a sign of dissent.]

CROMER: Some members of this honorable Council evidently forget that this country belongs to King Henry, and also that this estate is at present in the hands of one who is disloyal to his Majesty.

DE LA HIDE: This country belongs to the Irish people.

CROMER: No, no. Pope Adrian IV gave it to King Henry II, in order that his Majesty——

DE LA HIDE: It was not his to give.

A COUNCILLOR: Certainly not. How could it be his?

CROMER: Please do not interrupt me. The Pope, in a solemn Bull, gave Ireland to the English King in order that his Majesty, being the supreme master of it, might suppress the lawlessness and the vice which prevailed in it at the time.

DE LA HIDE (*hotly*): That is not true.

A COUNCILLOR: Order! Order! Do not insult the LORD CHANCELLOR.

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR (*To DE LA HIDE*): Withdraw that offensive epithet.

A COUNCILLOR: Truth is neither offensive nor insulting.

DE LA HIDE: That papal Bull was spurious. It was forged in England.

CROMER: I am astonished to hear you say so. Your allegiance to the Sovereign Pontiff is very weak.

DE LA HIDE: It is stronger than yours, prelate though you are.

CROMER: What shall we do about this letter of Dalby's? I suggest that we comply with his two requests—to send him more money to enable him to continue and to enlarge the scope of his loyal work; and to authorize him to annex that estate which he mentions.

DE LA HIDE: Most emphatically I protest against such a scandalous injustice. I know that the majority of my colleagues at this council board—several of them beneficiaries of the generosity and magnanimity of the great Earl of Kildare—are ready to approve of whatever you suggest. But——

[*Enter SILKEN THOMAS, hurriedly, with several of his followers, his helmet on, and holding the gold-scabbarded sword of state in his two hands.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

Friends, Councillors, and worthy gentlemen,
The evil news from London you have heard:
My father to the headsman sent, because
He loved his country better than his King.
No longer will I keep this sword of state,
The emblem now of slavery. Here and now,
Like the allegiance I have borne the King,
I cast it from me with contempt.

[He flings the sword of state on the Council table. The COUNCILLORS rise, with murmurs of amazement.]

SEVERAL COUNCILLORS: My lord!

SILKEN THOMAS (*drawing his sword*):

Against this foreign tyrant's bloody rule
I am a rebel! And I dedicate

[Waving aloft his sword]

My sword, my mind, my heart, my very life,
To one supreme and all-engrossing purpose:
To banish from my country every trace
And vestige of the Sassenah invader!

[END OF ACT III.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Tent of SILKEN THOMAS on a battlefield.
Camp table and chair. Occasional rifle shots heard outside.

[*Enter JERRY the Bagpiper.*]

JERRY: I thought our brave young Commander-in-Chief was here in his tent. They told me he was. Maybe he'll be back soon. I'll wait awhile, anyhow. I want to see him very particularly; for I've a great favor to ask of him; and he's such a fine, noble-souled young gentleman—a soldier, every inch of him, to his finger-tips—that I'm almost sure he won't have the heart to refuse. I'd far rather be fighting the enemy than be playing these bagpipes of mine, much as I like to play them.

[*Enter MIKE the Fiddler.*]

MIKE: Why, it's JERRY with his bagpipes, as true as I'm alive. What the mischief brings you here, JERRY, may I ask?

JERRY: 'The same things that brought you here, MIKE—a pair of shanks.

MIKE: Oh, I mean: what object had you in view in coming to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief?

JERRY: Business of a private, personal and pressing nature.

MIKE: Faith! that's what I'm here for myself.

JERRY: But isn't it presumptuous for you to call upon The Commander-in-Chief by yourself, without anybody to introduce you to his lordship? Have you a letter of introduction from your superior officer?

MIKE: No. Have you?

JERRY: I haven't.

MIKE: Then why don't you practice what you preach?
What do you mean by asking me if I have one?

JERRY: I think it's bad enough for me to come by myself without you doing the same. Besides, to tell you the truth, MIKE: I was afraid that if I did ask my superior officer for a letter of introduction to LORD THOMAS, he'd want to know what I wished to see him for; and I feel certain that if I told him why, he wouldn't let me come here at all. So I'm taking French leave.

MIKE: Begorra! It's exactly the same with me. I'm running a risk, I know, in doing it. But the Lord Deputy, I know now, is a splendid character and is free and easy, with nothing stuck-up about him; and so I made up my mind to see him about it.

JERRY: About what?

MIKE: I don't mind telling you, JERRY; but you must promise me that you won't let anybody else know in case I don't get the permission I'm after.

JERRY: You may depend upon me, MIKE. I won't give your secret away.

[Enter BARNEY the Harper.]

MIKE (*confidentially*): It's to fight with the soldiers I want, instead of playing my bag-pipes to them.

JERRY: Why, man alive! that's just what I'm after, too. I'd rather fight than play, any time. But now that there's a grand opportunity to set our dear old motherland free for ever, I want to be in the thick of the closing fight.

BARNEY: That's fine! boys; fine! I'm with you. I'm anxious to fight for Ireland's freedom too.

MIKE: Our men have had the Sassenah on the run lately. The final victory is already in sight.

JERRY: But I hear that the enemy are determined to win this coming battle. They've been getting a lot of reinforcements and provisions.

[*Enter SILKEN THOMAS, Unnoticed.*]

BARNEY: That's all the better. It'll be a hard struggle—just what I'm aching for. I want to fight for Ireland's freedom—ay, and to die for it, too, if that's God will.

JERRY AND MIKE: So do I.

SILKEN THOMAS: Brave boys! I am delighted to hear you say that. You express the spirit that should animate us today—and that does animate us all. I believe.

JERRY: Strange to say, my lord, we three have taken the liberty to come to beg the same favor at your hands. We didn't come here together, and we hadn't talked to one another about it.

SILKEN THOMAS: The same favor! What is it, boys?

JERRY: We implore your permission, my lord, to fight with the soldiers, instead of playing our musical instruments.

THE OTHER THREE: Yes, yes, LORD THOMAS. Kindly allow us to take part in the fighting.

SILKEN THOMAS: But by playing your musical instruments you really take part in the battles. You risk your lives the same as the soldiers do; and your martial tunes not only keep up but intensify the courage and the fighting spirit of the troops. Your instruments are, in your hands, as effective weapons as are the blades and the muskets in the hands of the soldiers.

MIKE: But we're convinced, my lord, that we could do more for Ireland with swords and guns than with our music. There are minstrels enough with the troops without us. Kindly grant us the favor we humbly beg of your lordship.

SILKEN THOMAS: Yours is such an unusual request that I readily comply with it.

THE THREE: Thank you, LORD THOMAS; thank you.

[*Exit SILKEN THOMAS*]

JERRY: Before we part with our instruments let us play a few tunes.

BARNEY: We've played enough with them already. We're soldiers now and not musicians. Let's stick to our new profession.

MIKE: You're right. We've got leave to change our instruments, and the sooner we take advantage of the permission the better. It will take us some time to get used to our new ones.

JERRY: But, God save us from all harm! this may be the last time that we will have an opportunity to play together. One of us, two of us—ay, the whole three of us—may be killed.

BARNEY: Or crippled. You're right, JERRY. This may be the last tune any of us will ever play. Say, boys, can you tell me how it is that the ladies of all civilized countries are so fond of Irishmen?

JERRY: Because they—there are so many reasons that I can't hit on the principal one. Let me see.
(*reflects*)

MIKE: Because we're such a fine lot of fellows.

BARNEY: In what particular way?

MIKE: In every way.

BARNEY: That would be going a little too far and, besides, it would be too general. I'll tell you why. It is because Irishmen do everything the ladies tell them to do and lot of things the ladies don't ask them to do. And what more could they do for the ladies?

JERRY: Nothing more, indeed. Was I telling you about the narrow escape I had recently from the bullet of a cowardly Sassenah?

MIKE: You didn't say anything about it to me.

BARNEY: Nor to me. How did it happen?

JERRY: He was a spy and was skulking behind the trunk of a big oak-tree when I happened to pass by. As soon as my back was turned and I had walked about twenty feet he fired at me. The bullet knocked my caubeen off, and when I looked behind me I saw him running along a boreen through the woods as if the Dheecowl himself was after him.

MIKE: Faith, you had a narrow escape, JERRY. Some poor old woman that you befriended, or a young one that likes you, must have been praying for you.

BARNEY: Did you follow him?

JERRY: I did.

BARNEY: Did you overtake him?

JERRY: I did.

MIKE: What happened then?

JERRY: He'll never sin again.

[They play several tunes and go off]

[Enter SILKEN THOMAS hastily with a dispatch in his hand, followed by a soldier. He sits at the little camp table and reads the dispatch. Then he writes a reply and hands it to the soldier, who

salutes him and goes out. SILKEN THOMAS rises and quickly walks from right to left and back.]

[Enter a soldier with a dispatch which he hands to SILKEN THOMAS after the usual military salute. Exit Soldier. SILKEN THOMAS reads the dispatch, and then rises quickly to his feet.]

SILKEN THOMAS:

What evil news is this? Maynooth has fallen;
Less through the overwhelming force of those
Who my ancestral stronghold had besieged
Than through the treachery of some Sassenah louts
Amongst its brave defenders; Skeffington,
The new-appointed Deputy, ensconced
Within its grudging walls, from which there hang
The bodies of slain, consecrated priests,
Friends of my house, and, more important still,
My suffering country's cause. But very soon
Maynooth shall be re-captured, and the heads
Of Skeffington and his chief officers
Shall on its turrets be enspiked.

[Enter an IRISH OFFICER]

IRISH OFFICER: My lord, those disaffected Sassenah soldiers who were so fond of boasting of their ardent loyalty to you and the noble cause in which we are engaged, have run away—deserted—in a body; ample proof of preconcerted treachery.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Traitors here,

In my own camp! The fault is mine. I should
Their fealty have mistrusted from the first,
Since they are Sassenahs. But there yet remain
Enough of my own countrymen to win

The patriotic triumph that we seek,
 And shall achieve if we this battle win.
 O'CONNOR'S and O'CONNELL'S men are here,
 Bold soldiers every one; and now O'BYRNE,
 O'DONNELL and O'NEILL, with forces strong,
 Are marching hither. With such brave allies
 The sacred purpose which inflames my heart
 With patriotic fire, and unto which
 My life is consecrated—to destroy
 The domination of the alien foe,
 To banish every vestige of his power—
 Will be accomplished soon.

[Enter O'BYRNE, accompanied by MOIRA]

SILKEN THOMAS (*shaking him by the hand*):

The brave O'BYRNE!

THE O'BYRNE:

Who with his clan has hastened here to join
 Your valiant followers in striking down
 The invading Sassanahs' power; in setting free
 Our motherland from his despotic grasp.
 O'DONNELL and his men are not far off;
 O'NEILL is coming also, with the flower
 Of his intrepid army.

SILKEN THOMAS (*to MOIRA*)

Thou too here!

[*To the O'BYRNE*]

But why expose this gentle spouse of thine
 To war's rude perils?

O'BYRNE: I could not keep her back. She has organized
 A corps of nurses for the wounded.

SILKEN THOMAS:

That

Is strongest, clearest proof that could be given
 Of noblest patriotism. Self-sacrifice

The patriot's brightest mark must ever be.
Still, I would rather see this post of honor,
So fraught with danger, filled by some one else.

MOIRA :

We Irishwomen always are prepared
To risk our lives for our dear country's cause.

SILKEN THOMAS :

Fair heroine! Devotion such as thine
Trebles our courage, fortifies our hope,
And adds fresh ardor to our high resolve
To be successful in this final stage
Of our great, patriotic enterprise.

MOIRA (*Going out*) :

We *shall* succeed!

THE O'BYRNE: Let me congratulate you on the victories you have won. They have struck terror to King Henry's heart.

SILKEN THOMAS :

Have you heard any tidings from Dublin?

THE O'BYRNE: Sir William Skeffington, who fills again the office of Lord Deputy, has returned to Dublin, and has announced that in the Castle he will henceforth stay, leaving to younger men the task of leading the campaign against us. But it is known that he has been superseded as Lord Deputy by another.

SILKEN THOMAS: I may perhaps once more lay siege to Dublin.

THE O'BYRNE: It was a daring feat—your capture of that city at the head of but a few retainers. Now the King, petitioned by the Sassenahs of the Pale, has sent across Lord Leonard Grey——

SILKEN THOMAS: My kinsman; and no mean soldier.

O'BYRNE: In supreme command of military matters in this country and Lord Deputy in everything but name, he's advancing here with re-enforcements.

SILKEN THOMAS:

He'll get a warm reception when he comes!

[*Sound of musketry. The March "O'DONNELL ABOO" is heard in the distance.*]

O'BYRNE: O'DONNELL's force is here.

SILKEN THOMAS:

That fighting tune
Reminds me of the war-cry of my house,
That has been heard on many a battlefield,
But never yet in such a righteous cause
As this for which we are struggling.

O'BYRNE:

"Crom Aboo!"

A battle-cry that pledges victory!

[*Enter O'DONNELL's clan marching to "O'DONNELL ABOO," as in Act I. The march "Garryoween" follows, O'BYRNE exclaiming: "These are my men." When they have passed on, O'DONNELL enters the tent and greets SILKEN THOMAS and THE O'BYRNE.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

This coming battle with the Sassenah hordes
Will be decisive. Therefore, let our plans
Be thoroughly discussed and carried out
With vigor and precision. Let us survey
Our actual position, and take note
Of what advantages it offers us.

O'DONNELL: An excellent location we have here, with scope for admirable strategy.

O'BYRNE (*to O'DONNELL*): MOIRA is here, with nurses
for our men.

O'DONNELL: Good! I would like to see her.

O'BYRNE: Come along.

[*To SILKEN THOMAS*]

We shall return anon.

[*O'BYRNE and O'DONNELL going off.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

Pray, wait while.

Bad news has reached me from Maynooth. That
great

And storied stronghold of our hardy house
Has just surrendered to old Skeffington.

He must have captured it ere he returned
To Dublin. Sassenah traitors were, it seems,
Within its walls, unknown and unsuspected.

They helped my enemies when it was besieged.
I counted on their loyalty.

O'BYRNE: Grave mistake! Experience has, in more
than one event, proved that the Sassenah never
should be trusted.

O'DONNELL: Ay—sad experience too.

SILKEN THOMAS:

I know that well.

I always have distrusted them, although
My father counted on their faithfulness.

Another instance of their treachery

Occurred within this hour. A small brigade
Composed of them entirely, who have fought
With me in many a recent battle, have
Deserted in a body.

O'DONNELL: Happy riddance! Our ranks are now made up of our own men, whom we can trust without the least misgiving.

O'BYRNE: On native arms the patriot must rely.

[*Enter an IRISH SOLDIER.*]

SOLDIER (*to SILKEN THOMAS*): Our scouts have finished reconnoitering. They report that we have a marked advantage over the enemy in position; but he is somewhat superior in respect of numbers.

[*SILKEN THOMAS motions to the SOLDIER to retire. Exit SOLDIER, after saluting.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

But dash and bravery always did outpoint
Superiority in numbers.

O'BYRNE:

When

A nation's freedom is at stake.

[*"Parley" bugle sounds.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

What's that?

A bugle sound of parley. What is up?

[*Enter an ENGLISH OFFICER in red uniform with a flag of truce.*]

ENGLISH OFFICER: LORD THOMAS, I presume?

[*SILKEN THOMAS nods assent.*]

ENGLISH OFFICER:

Lord Leonard Grey,
Who of King Henry's army in this land
Is now supreme commander, sent me here
To tell thee, as a kinsman and a friend,

That he requests a parley, with the view
Of ending further, useless strife. He prays
That, facing sure defeat, disgrace and death,
Thou shouldst lay down thine arms.

SILKEN THOMAS (*with animation*):

Lay down my arms!
Give up this righteous struggle! Yield! Have I
Thy message heard aright? He is distraught,
Or much misunderstands me. Sassenah, go!
Tell Grey this war for Ireland's freedom shall
Go on till victory has been achieved,
Or my brave, faithful followers and myself
Have on the altar of our country's cause
Our mingled life-blood poured.

ENGLISH OFFICER: Lord Leonard Grey has written
thee this letter.

[*He hands a document to SILKEN THOMAS.*]

SILKEN THOMAS (*reading*): "Beloved Cousin: It were
impossible not to admire the rare courage, high
military ability, and consummate strategy with
which you have hitherto conducted this insensate
and, so far as you are personally concerned, foolish
and unprovoked rebellion against your King. I am
charged, however, by your noble father, who is
suffering from a dangerous sickness, brought on
by grief, humiliation, and shame at your disloyal
conduct, to beseech you to lay down your arms and
to disperse your men, not only as an act of loyalty
and submission to your sovereign, but as the sole
condition upon which he—your noble father—can
be released from the Tower and be permitted to
return to his native land. The King empowers me

to offer you, in return, full pardon for your heinous crime of high treason against his Majesty.

LEONARD GREY''

[O'BYRNE and O'DONNELL whisper to each other excitedly.]

SILKEN THOMAS:

My father living still! Thank Heaven for that!
And, by desisting from all further strife,
I can restore him liberty and health——
For, by this time, he must prostrated be
By my rash-seeming conduct, unaware
Of what my motives and my reasons were.

[*He pauses*]

Yet what a sacrifice this means to me!
To lay down arms upon the very eve
Of that bright, happy day for which I've yearned
And fought with all my might—the glorious day
On which, my country! I had hoped to place
The diadem of Freedom on thy brow.
My father living still! His future fate
In my own hands!

ENGLISH OFFICER:

Lord Grey will hither come
When thou thy men hast ordered to return
A league from hence. He craves an interview
For this sole purpose—that he may excite
Enough paternal love within thy breast
To end thine ailing father's sore suspense.
His life is now imperilled. Thy reply?

SILKEN THOMAS:

My men are ready to advance; they now
Await my orders. But this fateful news

Upsets my plans. They shall retire at once
 The stipulated distance. How I yearn
 To see my valiant father once again!

O'BYRNE and O'DONNELL (*together*): No, No, No!

SILKEN THOMAS (*to ENGLISH OFFICER*):

Thou wilt retire until I summon thee.

[*Exit ENGLISH OFFICER*]

O'BYRNE (*hotly*):

It would be worse than folly,—nay, a crime—
 A base betrayal of our country's cause—
 To let this splendid opportunity
 Of crushing, once for all, our Sassenah foe
 Pass unavailed of.

O'DONNELL: It were very madness! And traitorous
 also.

SILKEN THOMAS:

Listen, friends,

Before you both so bitterly condemn me.
 My father's life is to his native land
 As precious as it is to me, his son.
 That life is hanging in the balance now.

O'DONNELL: So, too, is Ireland's liberty.

O'BYRNE:

Reflect.

Through thee we pledged our honor and our swords
 To Ireland's national cause.

SILKEN THOMAS (*placing his hand upon his forehead*):

I thought him murdered.

O'DONNELL:

Then it was rather to avenge his death
 Than try to liberate thy country from
 The invaders' cruel and despotic yoke,
 That thou didst organize this armed revolt?

SILKEN THOMAS:

Hush! Speak not thus to me. (*Looking upward.*)

Great God! Thou knowest

It was my father's rumored taking off
That, for the first time, made me realize
My solemn duty to my native land.

A moment since, I faltered; quite upset
By the assurance that my father lives.

I shall receive Lord Grey; and to his face
Refuse with his conditions to comply,

Even at the awful price that he exacts—

My much-loved father's death. Retire, my friends,

Retire the stipulated distance with

My army ready at a moment's call

To give quick battle to our enemy.

O'DONNELL: Thy order I obey, but under protest.

O'BYRNE: And so do I, and with a troubled heart.

[*Exeunt O'BYRNE AND O'DONNELL.*]

SILKEN THOMAS:

I'll tell that Sassenah officer I consent

To hold a parley with Lord Leonard Grey.

[EXIT]

[*Enter one of SILKEN THOMAS' soldiers.*]

SOLDIER (*looking around him*): Musha, where is our great leader, SILKEN THOMAS? I could have sworn I saw him a minute ago. Well, of course, he's giving orders about the great battle that will soon begin. I believe it will be sharp and short; and then we'll bid farewell to the cursed Sassenah. Oh, but this will be a grand day for Old Ireland! All the murders and all the massacres that we have been the victims of, will be avenged today! Thankful

am I that I have been spared to take part in this fight. If I'm mortally wounded I'll be happy, with your name, Green Erin! agra machree! upon my dying lips.

[*Enter another of SILKEN THOMAS' soldiers*]

SECOND SOLDIER: What do you think of this latest mysterious move, SHAMUS?

FIRST SOLDIER: What move do you mean, TERRY?

SECOND SOLDIER: Our army is slowly retreating—to what part I don't know. There's only a handful of us left here to act as body-guard over SILKEN THOMAS.

SECOND SOLDIER: But I heard both these chieftains, before they mounted their horses, to lead their followers towards our retreating forces, say strange things. "I doubt the wisdom of SILKEN THOMAS in ordering this temporary retreat," said one. "I doubt it also, as you know," said the other. And he added: "But since he's the Commander-in-Chief there's nothing for us to do but to obey." I think, SHAMUS, there's something wrong somewhere.

FIRST SOLDIER: Ah, what's the use of worrying? It's time enough to bid the devil "good morning" when you meet him.

[*TERRY gazes out through the entrance to the Tent*]

TERRY: Come and look, SHAMUS. I'm afraid I can't believe my eyes. See! Here's a company of the enemy approaching us, holding aloft flags of truce. What do they want?

[*SHAMUS looks out*]

SHAMUS: Why, it's as plain as a pike-staff. They are coming to ask SILKEN THOMAS to give them easy

terms if they surrender. They're afraid to fight us. I'm very sorry. I never felt more anxious to kill half a dozen red-coats than I do now.

TERRY: I share your anxiety in that line.

[*Re-enter SILKEN THOMAS*]

TERRY: My lord, I can't understand——

SILKEN THOMAS:

'Tis simply this: Lord Grey, in chief command
Of all the Sassenah forces here, desires
To hold a parley with me. Please withdraw.

[*The two soldiers withdraw*]

[*Enter LORD LEONARD GREY, with numerous followers, who slowly surround SILKEN THOMAS*]

LORD GREY:

Impetuous, traitorous, and unwary youth!
Upon a triumph with such ease achieved
I had not counted. Seize the traitor,—quick!

SILKEN THOMAS (*struggling*):

What infamy is this?

LORD GREY:

A simple trap

That I prepared for thee, and into which
Thou hast with crass credulity now fallen.
To London Tower thou shalt at once proceed,
To share thy father's fate.

SILKEN THOMAS: Then he *was* slain?

LORD GREY:

He only paid the penalty incurred
By treachery to his King. A similar doom
Thou hast much more deserved than he, and soon
Wilt suffer.

SILKEN THOMAS (*after again vainly trying to release himself*):

'Tis too true. I am entrapped.

Perfidious Sassenah! Hell has never held

A falsèr, viler miscreant than thou!

LORD GREY (*to his men*): Take him along. We have no time to lose.

[END OF ACT IV.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Tyburn, near London. Morning. The old gallows, "Tyburn's triple tree," close by. A year and a half are supposed to have elapsed since the Fourth Act.

[*Enter DE LA HIDE, disguised as an English peasant.*]

DE LA HIDE (*peering around him*):

Is this the place? (*Sees the gallows*) Ay, there the gallows stands—

The ghastly instrument by which man's law

The calls of justice executes or thwarts,

And murder oft by murder is avenged.

[*Enter O'DONNELL, also disguised as an English peasant.*]

O'DONNELL (*to DE LA HIDE*):

A cold and gloomy day. Thou hast come here

To see the Irish rebel leader hanged?

DE LA HIDE (*eyeing him suspiciously*):

What boots it if I have? And yet, methinks,
It were a satisfaction to behold
A traitor expiating with his life
His horrid crime. I'll stay to see him die.
They say that he is noble, young and brave,
And battled like a hero.

O'DONNELL:

So I heard.

A rumor adds: it was his father's death
Upon the block, by order of the King,
That drove him to rebellion. Dost thou know
If that is true?

DE LA HIDE:

I heard that story, too;

But whether it is false or true, is more
Than I can tell. Of these affairs of state
Men of the class 'mongst whom my way of life
Is laid can know but little.

O'DONNELL:

I have asked

About his father's crime, but have not learned
The nature of his guilt.

DE LA HIDE:

If innocent

His father was, then what a pity 'tis!

O'DONNELL:

Ay, what a pity! Is it possible
That guiltless men can such an awful doom
In silence suffer?

DE LA HIDE:

In this wicked world

Few things repugnant to the moral law
Can surely be declared impossible.

O'DONNELL: "All things are possible," they say in
France.

DE LA HIDE (*eagerly*): Then thou hast been in France?

O'DONNELL: A little while.

DE LA HIDE: I, too, have been in France.

O'DONNELL:

A sprightly lot
Those Frenchmen are. Politeness, elegance,
And wit seem with them born.

DE LA HIDE:

I think they are
A trifle too polite.

O'DONNELL:

Politeness gives
The grace and dignity that social life
Derives its charm from; and it seems to be
A happy fault indeed to have too much.

DE LA HIDE:

More oft it is assumed than felt. At best,
'Tis artificial.

O'DONNELL:

That I do not grant.
But even if it were so, is it not
An aspect of the beauty of the mind?

DE LA HIDE:

From motive only every merit springs.
In what a strange direction have our thoughts
Begun to drift! (*He furtively scans O'DONNELL*)
(*Aside*) He is not what he seems.
I must be guarded in my speech with him.

O'DONNELL (*Aside*):

A polished gentleman is here disguised.
Is it through adverse fortune or design
He wears that lowly garb? I am afraid
I've been imprudent saying what I said.

(*Aloud*)

Thou hast the air and tone of one whose breast
Smarts with a sense of wrong or grief.

DE LA HIDE: Of both.

O'DONNELL:

Thou hast my sympathy. Command my aid
If aught it may avail thee, and thy cause
Is square with justice.

DE LA HIDE:

Truth and honesty

Such frank and generous impulses denote.
But we are strangers.

O'DONNELL:

In my native land

A stranger holds a passport to our hearts.

DE LA HIDE: Thy birthplace, then, is Ireland.

O'DONNELL: So is thine.

DE LA HIDE: Whence this conclusion?

O'DONNELL:

By thy promptitude

In ascertaining where I first saw light.

A strange encounter this, at such an hour,
In such a place!

DE LA HIDE:

Perhaps a kindred thought

Has led us hither.

O'DONNELL:

That we have met before.

DE LA HIDE:

Memory whispers me

I am not unfamiliar with thy voice.

Already have I recognized thee. (O'DONNELL *starts*)

Thou

Amongst *his* friends wert numbered, so was I.

Thou art O'DONNELL (*They shake hands*) of the faithful North.

O'DONNELL:

And who art thou?

DE LA HIDE:

My name is DE LA HIDE.

O'DONNELL:

Sir James, this meeting to an aching heart
Brings welcome balm.

DE LA HIDE:

The grief we know is shared
Stings less than that which we alone must bear.
Of this encounter I am doubly glad.
Immured in prison since young Lord Kildare,
At the beginning of his just revolt,
O'er captured Dublin raised his Silken flag,
And only yesterday released, I thirst
For information touching the events
Of the remainder of the brief career
That ends this morning here.

O'DONNELL:

That bright, sad tale,
Admits of brief narration. Forth he went
And battled fiercely with his country's foes;

And triumph after triumph he achieved.
 Week followed week, and month succeeded month;
 And still he fought, relentless, tireless, till,
 His strong-hold at Maynooth by treachery lost,
 And he campaigning in the south, betrayed
 By alien plotters in his chosen ranks,
 An easy victim to a cunning plot,
 Having confided in the solemn pledge
 His false-tongued, sinuous kinsman, GREY, had given,
 He stopped hostilities, and from the field
 Retired, as in his candor he believed,
 With all the honors of the righteous war.
 What followed? He was captured, chained, and sent
 To London, where in jail he has been kept
 Until this hour. His uncles share his fate.

DE LA HIDE:

What? SILKEN THOMAS ceased to battle ere
 He gained the end for which he bravely fought:
 To bless with liberty his native land?
 That is astonishing. I would have sworn
 He had preferred to die.

O'DONNELL:

He did not yield

To force superior or through lack of will
 To keep on fighting, as thou hast surmised.
 Tyrants may kill—they cannot conquer—men
 Of his heroic parts. He was deceived.
 LORD GREY assured him that his father lived,
 And that the rumor that he was beheaded
 Was fabricated by the men who schemed
 His aged father's ruin and his own.

DE LA HIDE (*gazing in the distance*):

Now starts the sad procession. In its midst

Walks, firm of step and calm of visage, he
Whose bosom once enclosed a nation's fate.

O'DONNELL (*gazing in the same direction*): Death
holds no bitterness for such as he.

DE LA HIDE:

How could it? To the virtuous and the brave
Death is the only portal that admits
To real life. Beyond that sombre gate
Unconscious worth its guerdon will receive,
Surprised at merits of desires and deeds
So seeming trivial that they were forgot.

[*He pauses*]

Let us avert our faces when he comes,
Lest he should recognize us. If he did,
His mind, now tranquil with its sense of right,
Might with emotion be disturbed.

O'DONNELL:

If we

Could rescue him by giving up our lives
For his, how happy both of us would die!

DE LA HIDE:

Alas! 'Twere worse than useless to essay
To help him now. Our lives would wantonly,
In fatuous, hopeless, and inglorious strife,
Be thrown away. But to the sacred cause
For which he dies—the cause which is our own—
We also can devote our lives.

O'DONNELL:

I see,

Beside the hero, keeping step with him,
The patriotic prelate, brave MacHugh,
His post of double duty occupying
As priest and friend.

DE LA HIDE:

His presence now will soothe
The final moments of our youthful chief.

O'DONNELL:

How sad, humiliating, is our sense
Of abject helplessness, when on our ears
The plaintive and emergent voice of need
Must, as it were, unheeded fall! My soul
Is wrung with bitterness, as well as grief.

(with sudden energy)

Oh, for a squadron of Tyrconnell's men!

DE LA HIDE:

'Tis difficult to check a pitying tear
When thinking of the death he now must die
On yonder cursed gibbet, in the spring
And primal fragrance of his manhood's years.
In vain will chivalry's emblazoned scroll
Be scanned for knightlier life or death than his.

O'DONNELL:

It is a wonder that he has survived
The treatment that the brutal Sassenah
Have made him undergo since his arrest.
In foulest dungeon they have kept him chained
For many agonizing months, as though
He were the vilest malefactor born,
Instead of being a prisoner of war.
To him, so gently nurtured, so refined,
That daily, nightly, torture must have brought
As dreadful pangs as could the flames of hell.
This morning's hangings will exterminate
The famous family of the Geraldines.

First went the Chieftain, murdered in the Tower;
And now his brave, young, patriotic son.

[*points to the gallows*]

DE LA HIDE:

On one important point thou art mistaken.
This most atrocious butchery will not
Accomplish its foul purpose. There remains
The brother of LORD THOMAS, twelve years old,
For whom they now are searching, with the view
Of also putting him to death.

[*lowers his voice*]

He is

Concealed in France—and thus the noble line
Of valorous Kildares will be preserved
Despite the murderous wishes of the King.

O'DONNELL:

A brother but a dozen years of age!
I had not heard of him before. God grant
Him safety, health, and vigorous manhood, till
He shall, returning to his native land,
Wreak vengeance on the slayer of his kin,
The vile oppressors of his native land!

[*Enter two English Workmen.*]

FIRST WORKMAN (*looking up at the gallows*): The
gibbet prepared again! Who's to be hanged this
time, I wonder?

SECOND WORKMAN: Didn't you hear about it yet?
Why, a whole half dozen of those low Irish rebels,
all belonging to the same disloyal family. The
troublesome brood will now be all wiped out.

FIRST WORKMAN: A good riddance! Let's wait to see
them dangle.

SECOND WORKMAN: But I've some work to do. I must be off at once. Business before pleasure, you know.

FIRST WORKMAN: Away with work this forenoon. I'd gladly lose two days' wages to see these Irish hangings. It is something that doesn't happen every day.

SECOND WORKMAN: I've a half mind to stay. Yet—

FIRST WORKMAN (*looking*): Why, one of them is coming now.

SECOND WORKMAN (*looking in the same direction*): He is indeed. I'll wait to see the sport.

FIRST WORKMAN: When this Irish rebel has been hanged, and his head has been cut off and stuck on that spike up there, I'll throw stones at it.

SECOND WORKMAN: I'll join you in the fun.

DE LA HIDE (*to O'DONNELL*):

List to those Sassenah rascals. How they gloat
O'er an approaching massacre, like fiends.
Because the victims are all Irishmen
They call it sport.

O'DONNELL:

The heartless ruffians! I
Shall make them eat their words, or send them
sprawling
Upon the ground.

DE LA HIDE: Nay, don't be rash, I pray.

O'DONNELL: No longer can I stand their brutish glee.

[O'DONNELL *rushes at the two workmen, and knocks one down after the other. One rises, and is knocked down again. The other rises and runs away, followed by his companion.*]

DE LA HIDE:

Thus unconsidered action may attract

To us attention that may culminate
In our arrest, and speedy deathly doom.

O'DONNELL (*looking*):

There is no danger. Those two curs are running
In opposite direction to the gang
Of Sassenah soldiery that hither come.

[*Enter O'BYRNE and MOIRA, both disguised.*]

MOIRA (*to O'BYRNE*): That is my brother's voice.

O'BYRNE:

I hope it is.

He promised he would meet us here, so that
We three might take a final, farewell look
Into the youthful patriot-martyr's face,
Ere death released the soul that through it shined.

MOIRA: And his companion—who is he, I wonder?

O'BYRNE: If 'tis your brother I shall quickly know.

[*He addresses a greeting in Gaelic to
O'DONNELL, who rushes to him with out-stretched
hand.*]

O'DONNELL:

I feared that you had lost your way, or had
Been misinformed as to the fatal hour
When Sassenah vengeance will once more allay
Its newly whetted thirst for Irish blood.

O'BYRNE:

We missed our way, indeed; and were afraid
That we should reach here when 'twould be too late.
And your companion yonder, who is he?

O'DONNELL:

Kildare's most faithful friend, JAMES DE LA HIDE.

[*To MOIRA*]

MOIRA asthoreen, it's a perilous trip
That you have taken.

O'BYRNE:

Nothing could prevent

Her coming here.

[DE LA HIDE goes over to O'BYRNE, O'DONNELL and MOIRA.]

MOIRA:

Could I remain away

When this intrepid Knight, this noble-souled,
Pure-hearted patriot bows his youthful head,
Undaunted, to receive the martyr's crown?

[Orchestra plays "Savourneen Dheclish"]

[Enter procession, SILKEN THOMAS, in chains, and looking ghastly and pale, accompanied by MONSIGNOR MACHUGH, and preceded and followed by soldiers.]

[Knell rings]

SILKEN THOMAS:

The individual dies; the race lives on
Till Time his course has ended. It is thus
With Freedom's holy cause. When they are gone
Whose every thought and action were for her,
The spirit that inflamed *their* hearts and minds
Glow brighter still in those they leave behind
To carry on the noble fight; and so
No patriot ever lived or died in vain.

[Knell tolls again]

[CURTAIN]

END OF DRAMA

[illegible]

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